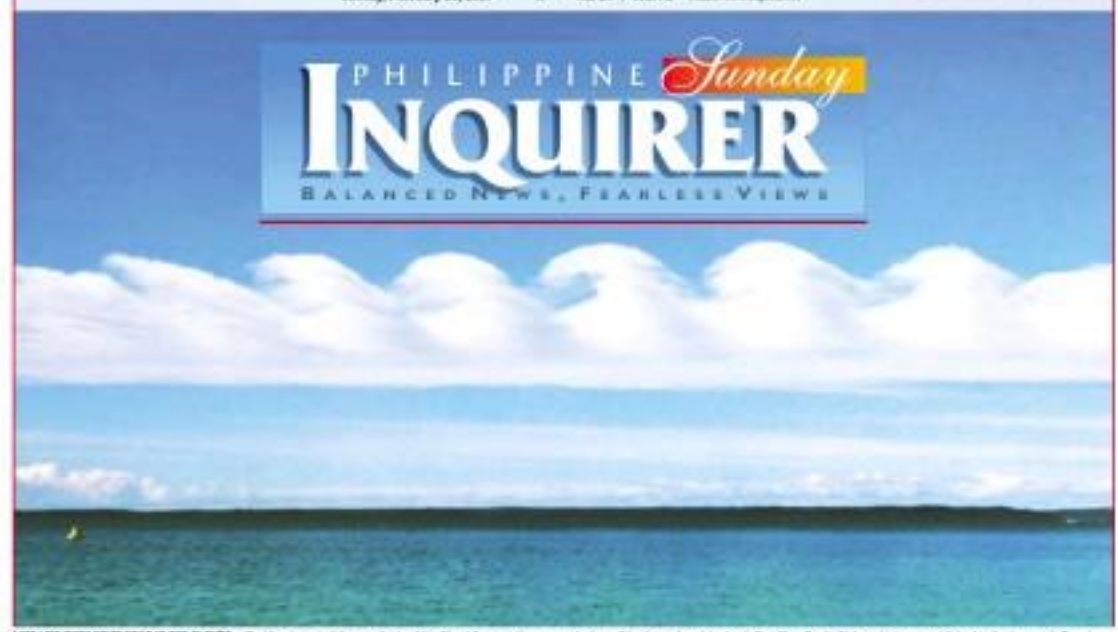
Sunday, February 22, 2009 ★ Vol. 24 / No. 76 philippine.inquirer.com

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



LIVE LIFE WITH YOUR HEAD IN THE CLOUDS That line is part of the manifesto of the Cloud Appreciation Society. The what? Yes, there is such a thing as Giselle Golloy who's a Sydney-based Filipina geologist by day and a cloud-gazer at all other times has discovered. Giselle's discovery of this UK-based society, which is devotedly in awe of clouds, started with this photograph of clouds like breaking sea waves that she herself took on a beach in Jervis Bay, New South Wales which was published in the Inquirer's Travel Section on July 15, 2007. This photo was used as the cover of the society's 2009 calendar and chosen as one of 120 photos to be included in the society's The Cloud Collector's Handbook, which will be out in June. Cloudy weather in just fine. NIELLE SOLOY

Bishops quit RH bill talks

Walkout mars meeting of Senate technical group

By Norman Bordadora

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN LAWMAKERS AND THE Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has come to a head, with CBCP representatives walking out of Senate discussions on the reproductive health bill and indicating they would no longer take part in such proceedings.

The CBCP representatives at the Senate committee on health's technical working group meeting on Thursday on the controversial bill walked out because the Catholic Church's views on population policy were not being taken into account, according to Fr. Melvin Castro, executive secretary of the CBCP's Episcopal Commission on Family Life.

"What is the technical working group for? We gave our views [but these] are only duly noted," Castro

BISHOPS A8

Ties that bind RP-US relations are set in stone

By Fe Zamora

THE TIES THAT BIND THE FILIPINO WAR veterans and the United States are literally set in stone, with all that that implies of hardness, solidity and immutability.

The island fortress of Corregidor, nicknamed "The Rock," was the site of the bloodiest battles with the invading Japanese during World War II, and has acquired tremendous significance as a symbol of the determined resistance of its Filipino and American defenders.

On July 10, 1951, a 200-pound stone slab from Corregidor was presented to US President Harry S. Truman at the White House.

In accepting the piece of rock, Truman said: "It is a symbol of our friendship and partnership in war and in peace, and it will be a continuing symbol of our friendship from now on."

The inscription on the bronze plaque attached to the piece of polished and mounted piece of stone reads: "Rock of Corregidor, symbol of resistance—Filipino and American courage in the face of failure, of nobility in time of triumph."

Truman received the piece of Corregidor from US Army Col. Harry M. Peak and Filipino Maj. Manuel A. Acosta, two survivors of the infamous Death March, on July 10, 1951, according to Acosta's son, Arturo.

TIES A9

DR. SUSAN ROTH (center) receives her "Breastfeeding Queen of the Philippines" award from President Macapagal-Arroyo, with husband, Alexander, and children Justin Sophie and Lilian Julie. EDDA SANTOS

RP breast-feeding queen is German

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE "BREASTFEEDING QUEEN OF the Philippines" is—quite ironically—not a Filipino.

She is German Dr. Susanne Roth, who was feted by the Children for Breastfeeding Inc. (CBI) last week, for championing the cause despite aggressive marketing campaigns of multinational milk companies.

Roth, a 32-year-old mother of two baby girls, is aware of the paradox that a foreigner has become the "face" of the local drive to promote breast-feeding.

But she is probably what the campaign needs to convince Filipino mothers that breast milk is still—and always has been—the

RP BREAST-FEEDING A6

On a cloudy day she saw forever

By Ester G. Dipasupil

I've looked at clouds from both sides now
From up and down and still somehow
It's clouds' illusions I recall
I really don't know clouds at all.
—"Both Sides Now" by Joni Mitchell

BACK THEN, GISELLE GOLOY DIDN'T really know much about clouds.

But one shimmering day at a beach in Jervis Bay, New South Wales, Australia, her friend Rhea happened to look up and saw a wave of clouds set against a bright blue sky. She promptly asked Giselle to pose against the magnificent backdrop.

Wanting to see what her friend was raving about, Giselle turned around and took a shot of the spectacular sky show.

CHAS CLOUDY A8

Money and women: Among Ed's biggest temptations

By Philip C. Tubeza

TAKE IT FROM A MAN OF THE CLOTH who has tasted the perks of public office.

Beautiful women and the lure of

HONEY A7

23 YEARS AGO

Cory speech was turning point of Edsa

By Yoly Contreras

IT WAS A MODEL WITHIN A MODEL, a crucial piece within the larger fringe of Philippine history that was Edsa 1.

The decision of Corazon Aquino to address the crowds on Edsa and expose herself to possible assassins, instead of waiting it out in safety until victory was complete, is a barely acknowledged "turning point" in the People Power Revolution of 1986.

This was according to a member of her inner circle and eyewitness to Aquino's course of action—much of it happening away from press coverage—during the tense four-day standoff between military defectors and loyalist troops of strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Then human rights lawyer, Aquino's election campaign leader, and now Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay was referring to Aquino's brief remarks delivered at the lobby of the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) building on

CORY A9

• Oscar bets—or why Brad Pitt shouldn't win • Feisty manager vs top TV executive, part 2 • Annabelle and Wilma at it again / ENTERTAINMENT • Pole dispute heats up with Malaysian and Brunei royal families watching • Diplomats' National Day receptions are happy hunting ground for pushy pair on social climbing binge / LIFESTYLE • 4 reasons to run • Running 101 • 6 great ways to get started • 9 best running routes / SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE

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Let's make VFA work, says Teodoro

'You just don't end a relationship, especially one that lays the golden egg'

By Jocelyn R. Uy and TJ Burgonio

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—WHEN COUples have a problem, they don't just end their relationship, they try to make it work.

This was how Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. put it yesterday as he explained how the Philippine government could salvage the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with the United States instead of scrapping it.

"Why kill the goose that lays the golden egg, so to speak? The Philippines has been deriving benefits from the agreement," Teodoro, guest speaker at yesterday's Philippine Military Academy homecoming, told reporters in an interview.

He suggested that instead of abrogating the VFA, both the U.S. and Philippine governments could institute preventive measures, such as limiting American troops' leave time, to avoid a repeat of what happened in the case of Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith.

Smith was convicted in 2006 of raping a Filipino woman identified only as "Nicole" during a "rest and recreation" leave at Hue Subic Bay Freeport.

The issue of whether to implement Smith sparked calls for the abrogation of the VFA from lawmakers.

Teodoro's statement was sparked by a Senate resolution seeking the abolition of the RP-US accord, in which a "supplemental agreement" known as "RP-U.S. status that a Filipino soldier who commits a crime in the US may not be held in a Philippine prison but in a US penal institution.

On the other hand, an American soldier who commits a crime in the Philippines will be detained in a US Embassy or penal facility.

Teodoro had earlier said the Philippines had made "mistakes" in signing the VFA, particularly because of its provision on the custody of US soldiers who violate Philippine laws.

Stressing he said the government could not just walk away from the agreement just because something went wrong along the way.

"Like in any other relationship, you try to make it work even when there is a problem... if it is unworkable then that's the time we must make another move," he said.

US help during calamities

The government has been drawing gains from the accord, especially in times of disaster, he said.

Citing Typhoon "Frank" that ravaged several provinces in the Visayas and took a ferry carrying hundreds of passengers in June last year, he said the Philippine government did not think twice about asking the US government for assistance.

"When we need it, we send the US to claim its obligation to us, but this cannot be. (The accord) is not a one-way deal," he said.

But Sen. Jinkoy Arroyo said yesterday that government would be in a better position to negotiate the "objectionable provisions" of the VFA if President Arroyo and the Senate were on the same track.

He urged the President and her colleagues to set aside partisanship and agree to seek a review of the VFA.

"This calls for statesmanship from both the executive and legislative branches—and no petty bickering—for the common good," he said in a phone interview.

The administration senator said Mrs. Arroyo need not wait for the Senate to adopt a resolution calling for a review and renegotiation of the agreement to make the first move.

"In the field of foreign affairs, the President has the supremacy. The initiative comes from the President, support comes from the Senate," he said, pointing out it's the President who signs a treaty and forwards it to the Senate for ratification.

The Supreme Court ruled on Feb. 11 that the agreement that led to Smith's detention at the US Embassy since December 2006 was inconsistent with the VFA, and ordered foreign affairs officials to "negotiate forthwith" with US representatives on Smith's imprisonment.

One-sided treaty

The US government has insisted it would keep custody of Smith until his conviction becomes final.

It was Senator Arroyo who released to the press a copy of VFA 2, a supplemental agreement that he said passed the VFA was "one-sided."

Under VFA 2, signed on Oct. 5, 2006, a Filipino soldier who commits a crime in the US cannot be held in a Philippine embassy or consulate, but "shall serve [his sentence] in penal institutions in the US suitable for the custody level of the prisoner."

Yesterday, Malacañang remained lukewarm to the growing calls for abrogation of the VFA.

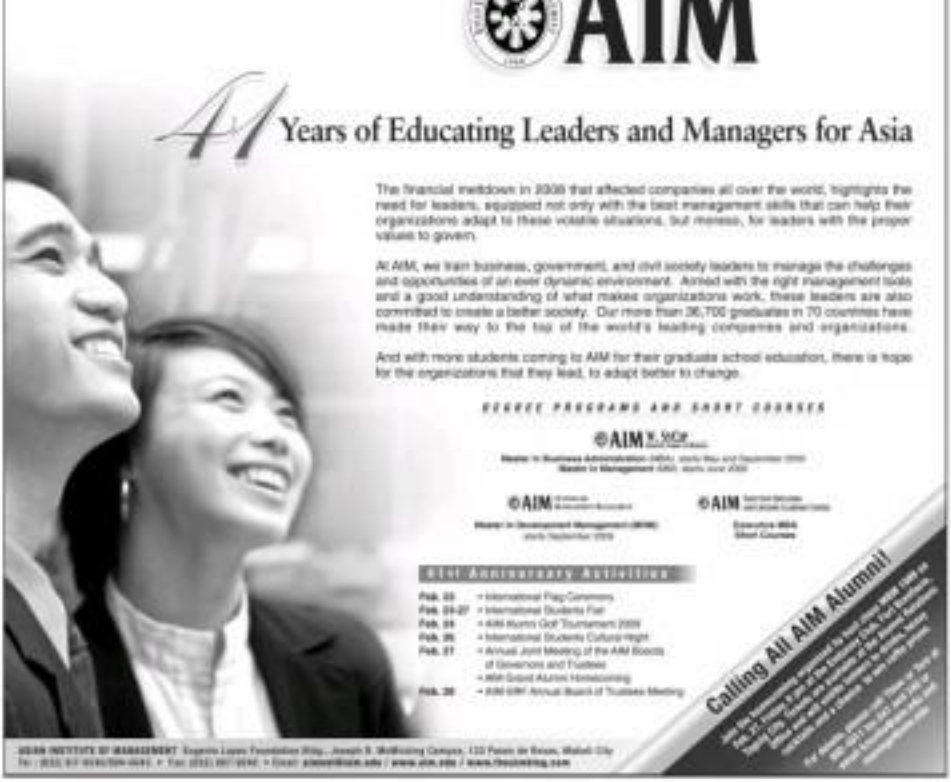
"As Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said, we should not rush these things because it will have serious ramifications on the future of our country as well as its international diplomatic relations, especially at this time when we need each other in the international community as we confront the global economic crisis," Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said in an interview over dzRH radio.

Remonde said the matter could be tackled in the next Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) meeting.

"After all, the Ledac was established to serve as a forum for the executive and legislative branches to discuss's exchange views," he said.

For her part, Mrs. Arroyo said the conflict document in the VFA may well bolster the move to have the RP-US pact declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Evelyn Ulyan said yesterday RP-U.S would form part of their appeal of the high court decision upholding the VFA while ordering Philippine detention for Smith.



RP seamen found guilty

LAGOS—A NIGERIAN court has sentenced 11 Filipinos to five years in prison or a fine of one million naira ($6,666) each for stealing 12,000 metric tons of crude oil in the Niger Delta, a report said Saturday.

The Daily newspaper said Justice Chukwuma Nnamani of the Federal High Court in the southern city of Benin handed down the sentences Friday after the Filipinos pleaded guilty to the offense.

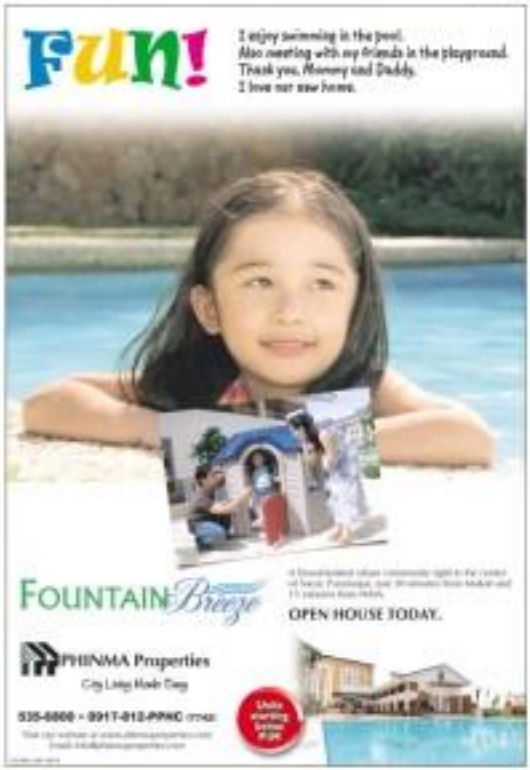
They were among 22 Filipinos arrested by a joint anti-piracy patrol on the Ward River on Nov. 14, 2008, on the vessel MT Abaseln which was laden with 12,500 metric tons of crude.

The newspaper gave no details on the remaining nine defendants. Neither the Nigerian Judicial agency EFCC nor the Philippines Embassy could be immediately reached for comment Saturday.

The theft of Niger Delta crude costs Nigeria millions of dollars in lost revenue every year, with smugglers selling an estimated 100,000 barrels a day to refineries.

In July, the navy arrested 14 Filipinos when another ship, the MT Sea Princess, was intercepted with stolen crude.

The Nigerian navy recently launched a new offensive against the theft of oil, widely referred to locally as "bunkering," in addition to fines of crude oil or refined petroleum products are stolen annually. AFP



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Help Pinoy vets file claims, Noli urges local executives

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO yesterday asked local government officials to help World War II veterans file their claims for a lump-sum compensation from the United States government, saying that most of them were sick and could barely walk.

The payment of a lump-sum benefit of $15,000 to veterans who are US citizens and $9,000 for non-Americans has been mandated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the economic stimulus package that President Barack Obama signed into law on Feb. 17.

Speaking at his radio program, "Para Sa Iyo, Bayan," De Castro said he had recently discussed with Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos, president of the League of Cities of the Philippines, the need to provide assistance to veterans moving to designated areas to file their claims.

De Castro said local government could help by providing transportation for veterans filing claims.

"I asked Mayor Abalos to request the mayors to assist our veterans," De Castro said.

Information campaign

Some 28,000 US-Filipino veterans are eligible for the compensation under the Revised Reconstructed Gala Bonus, or "The Allocsert Law," those 22,000 Filipino veterans on the list for the Philippines, while 6,000 of them are in the US.

Rebecca Thompson, spokesperson of the US Embassy in Manila, announced yesterday that personnel of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) in Manila would conduct an information campaign across the country to help explain the benefits in the revision and assist them in processing their claims to avoid confusion.

Thompson reminded the veterans and their families to first complete the requirements for the filing of claims to avoid any inconvenience.

Veterans have one year to file their claims.

"DSSEA staff from the embassy in Manila will be traveling throughout the Philippines to help explain the new benefits and accept claims. People should come with documents," Thompson said in an interview.

Eligibility

The US Embassy said the following were eligible for the benefit:

■ Persons who served before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the armed forces of the United States.

■ Members of the organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent authority in the Army of the United States.

■ Persons who served in the Philippine Scouts under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Voluntary Recruitment Act of 1945.

Must appear in person

To be eligible for the benefit, service members on each of the three categories must have been discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Also, claims can only be accepted from Filipino WW II veterans. If a veteran is unable to appear in person, the USDVA Manila regional office will arrange to obtain the applications in an appropriate manner.

Claims from spouses, widows and children of Filipino WWII veterans will not be accepted. However, spouses are eligible to receive this claim before Feb. 17, 2010, a surviving spouse can claim the benefit if the veteran passes away before the benefit is paid.

GMA to kick off Edsa rites

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo kicks off today the observance of the 1986 People Power Revolt that toppled the dictator Ferdinand Marcos with a seventh laying at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

The rites before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by the heroes' cemetery in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City will commence at 7:29 a.m. and mark the start of the 23rd anniversary of what is also known as the Edsa Revolution. The main celebration falls on Feb. 25.

Multitudes massed on Edsa for days in February 1986 to back the military officers and men who had broken away from Marcos, forcing him to capitulate and go into exile in Hawaii where he died years later.

Relive the spirit

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Marcos' defense minister who led the breakaway, will give an inspirational talk before Ms Arroyo delivers her message.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde urged all Filipinos to relive the spirit of people power as weather the global economic downturn.

"Edsa is the symbol of what's possible when we are one in purpose and firm in resolve. Edsa showed us we can do big things when we come together, put our petty biases and bitter fights out of the way and rise out of the global crisis that we must face with the rest of the world, the road to take is Edsa," Remonde said in an interview over dwBB radio.

Remonde said the President would continue to extend the hand of reconciliation to all sectors of society, including her critics, to the remaining 16 months of her term which ends June 30, 2010.

The only way

"Reconciliation is not an option but a must. Reconciliation is the only way. It might be difficult, but we must continue to pursue that," President Gloria, (that is herself) as a press secretary, said, is always extending the hand of unity and reconciliation to everyone, to every sector, to every politician of various stripes, especially using that the Philippines is confronted with the global crisis," he said.

Malacañang also defended its decision to declare a special holiday tomorrow only for public and private schools in all Visayas throughout the country.

"I think it's more important that the people will have a free time to reflect on the significance of Edsa I," Remonde said.

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Minimum Bid Price

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9th Floor PNB Financial Center, Pres. Diosdado Macapagal Blvd., Pasay City

Sealed offer and check payment for deposit must be submitted not later than
10:00 A.M./ Wednesday, March 4, 2009

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b) Duly accomplished Purchase Proposal Form and Buyer's Information Sheet
c) Duly signed Terms of Reference (this form)
d) Non-refund bearing deposit in the sum 10% of the offered purchase price in the form of Cashier's/Manager's Check payable to Philippine National Bank
e) Notarized Secretary's Certificate (if the bidder is a representative of a Corporation)
f) Notarized Special Power of Attorney (if the bidder is a representative of the Buyer)
2. Bids shall be in an "All or None" basis.
3. PNB's decision is final and binding. The withdrawal of bids shall be allowed even the highest complying bidder has been informed. Any withdrawal of bid by the highest complying bidder shall result to forfeiture of deposit by PNB.
4. In case two or more highest complying price bids are identical, the following shall be considered:
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■ if all bids are of equivalent value, the bid with the highest number of years for installment payments will be acknowledged as the winning complying bid
■ if two or more bids are identical in terms of price, payment scheme, a private sealed bidding shall be conducted on the spot among the
5. In the event that the highest complying bidder failed to comply with the specified payment terms, the 10% deposit shall be forfeited automatically.
6. PNB reserves the right to reject any and all bids or to post-bid/bid, waive any defect or informality on the bids received and accept the bid most advantageous to PNB and does not guarantee that any award shall be made.
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Ombudsman: We're probing everyone, even FG

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

URGED TO RESIGN FOR PERJURY, rally-striking on high-profile cases involving allies of the administration, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez said her office was investigating all the personalities linked to alleged corruption by the World Bank, including First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

"We are investigating all the names mentioned," Gutierrez said in a press conference Friday when she was asked if her office had included President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband in the probe of the loan-dealing issues raised in bids to the World Bank allegations.

The First Gentleman has been linked in one of the private documents the World Bank has barred from bidding for road projects due to alleged collusion with other consultants in the bidding for bank-funded projects in the Philippines.

"We are investigating everyone who is said to be involved. We are looking for pieces of evidence and whoever is affected, then so be it. That is not job," Gutierrez said.

GUTTIEREZ

Unfair allegations

Gutierrez, a law school classmate of the First Gentleman's, said allegations she was partial in late and fiercely of the administration were unfair.

"I have been in the service for 38 years. Can you cite any one or instance that you can say I favored friends or the First Gentleman in the course of my work?" she said.

She also lamented the lack of cooperation from the World Bank. The bank had given her office a copy of a nine-page report on alleged bid-rigging late year but it was marked confidential and stated that it could not be used or cited for any probe.

"When we got the report, it didn't have names of witnesses. There are about be a lot of witnesses, they said it was confidential," Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jahanlori said.

He said they did not learn there were other reports. "We only learned there were other (World Bank) reports from the media. To our surprise, there were names of witnesses mentioned in the media."

He said it was wrong of critics to assume the Ombudsman, which investigates and prosecutes cases against government officials, did not do anything.

"We continued the investigation despite our limitations. We even had certain inspections last year (and) we are wrapping up the investigation," Jahanlori said.

The removal of several World Bank reports had been published in the media and had been referred to by opposition Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

Gutierrez questioned where the documents had come from.

World Bank issue

"In the interest of justice and for everyone to know, where did the information come from? The World Bank should also answer why the (supposedly confidential) information is in the newspapers and why some people have copies [of the reports]," Gutierrez said.

Jahanlori, who heads the Ombudsman's Law Bidding area, said they went to the "final stages" of the investigation of the World Bank issue. He admitted, however, that they had not interviewed any of the witnesses mentioned in the reports.

He said they also had yet to subpoenaize their documents, which is a matter of procedure.

The anti-corruption group Coalition Against Corruption, which includes the Makati Business Club, had asked Gutierrez to resign, and its chair Jose Catala questioned her competence.

But Gutierrez turned the tables on Catala and the other businessmen, saying, "Were they done anything to address the corruption in the Bureau of Customs?"

"Who corrupts officials? Who offers bribes to coerce officials? Businessmen, right? What have they done to police their ranks?" Gutierrez said in Filipino.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, February 22, 2009
7th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Is 43:18-19, 21-22, 24-25

That, says the Lord: 'I'm not dwell on the past, or remember the things of old.

'Look, I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth;

'Do you not see? I am opening up a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

'I have formed this people for myself; they will proclaim my praise.

'You have not called upon me, O Jacob, indeed you were tired of me, O Israel.

'You have not spent money on sweet fragrances for me, neither have you satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices.

'Instead you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offences.

'It is I, I am he who blots out your offences for my own sake and remembers your sins no more.'

2nd Reading: 2 Cor 1:18-22

God knows that our dealing with you is not Yes and No, just as the love of God, Christ Jesus, whom we—Silvanus, Timothy and I—preached to you, was not 'Yes and No', with him it was simply 'Yes'. In him all the promises of God have become a Yes, and we also say in his name: Amen' giving thanks to God. God himself has anointed us and strengthened us with you in union with Christ: he has marked us with his own seal in a fresh outpouring of the Spirit in our hearts.

Gospel: Mk 2:1-12

After some days Jesus returned to Capernaum. As the news spread that he was at home, so many people gathered that there was no longer room even outside the door. While Jesus was preaching the Word to them, some people brought a paralysed man to him.

The four men who carried him couldn't get near Jesus because of the crowd, so they opened the roof above the room where Jesus was, through the hole they lowered the man on his mat. When Jesus saw the faith of these people, he said to the paralytic, 'My son, your sins are forgiven.'

Now some teachers of the Law who were sitting there considered within themselves, 'How can he speak like this insulting God? Who can forgive sins except God?'

At once Jesus knew through his spirit what they were thinking and asked, 'Why do you consider it is easier to say to this paralysed man, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Rise, take up your mat and walk?" But now you shall know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.'

And he said to the paralytic, 'I stand up, take up your mat and go home.' The man rose and, in the sight of all those people, he took up his mat and went out. All of them were astonished and praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'

Commentary

Jesus was moved by the faith of those people who helped the paralyzed man. In their faith, Jesus saw their concern and love for someone who is really in dire need of healing, or his did not disappoint them. Sometimes we can be in similar situations in life with that of the paralyzed man or with the people who helped him.

The paralyzed man is obviously in the mercy of other people. Sometimes we need people who can guide and bring us back to Jesus. Because of the many barriers in life that we experience—poverty, difficulties in any form of trials, depression, etc.—we find it hard to walk back to Jesus and ask Him for healing. Because we need other people, our family and friends, to carry us on the other hand, we can be the other people who helped the paralyzed man. The love and concern we have for our suffering neighbors compel us to help them. This action is pleasing in the sight of Jesus. So, whether we are the paralyzed man or the people who helped him, Jesus wants us to have faith in him. If we have faith, Jesus will heal us.

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Pastor walks to highlight extrajudicial killings

DIGOS CITY—A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST pastor has resumed his solitary walk from Mindanao to Aguncl, Cagayan, to call the government's attention to extrajudicial killings, attacks on journalists and other issues.

Deance Edenton Jimenez, a resident of Camanchilles in Matanao, Davao del Sur, accompanied a similar walk to Manila last year but only got as far as Calbayog City in Western Samar.

He was injured when he slipped on a road to Calbayog on Nov. 8, and was forced to turn back.

The 50-year-old Jimenez said the accident required him to rest for a few weeks.

"Now I am fit to try again," he said before setting off on Thursday.

Riding to Calbayog

This time, however, Jimenez will not be walking to Calbayog because he already completed that leg in November.

He said he would ride from Davao City to Calbayog and from there walk all the way to Aguncl and from there to Mindoro.

He expects to complete his journey from Mindoro to Aguncl and back by January 2010.

Just like last year, Jimenez set off with a copy of the Bible, some food, a few clothes for a mat/sleep, and an umbrella.

He said that apart from telling the government's attention to extrajudicial killings, he would use the opportunity to meet new people and convince them to help protect the environment.

Along the way, he said, he would preach the Gospel.

Nothing new

Walking from Mindoro to Luzon is nothing new for Jimenez.

On April 7, 1980, he joined a marathon against illegal drugs from Davao City to Manila, and reached the destination on May 20.

A year later, he said 24 others completed a similar activity.

SAMSON: Walking for a cause nothing new for him. CHARLIE A. CINCO

Dionisio Espinosa, a student in Digos who is among those closely monitoring Jimenez's activities, expressed the belief that the pastor was serious in his advocacy.

"Some may say this is only for publicity. But it is not a joke to walk across the Philippines to advocate peace and respect for human rights. Let us pray that many could tell his enlightened by this selfless act," Espinosa said. —Delmindo B. Elbera, *Inquirer Mindanao*

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Rethink tuition hike, Lapus tells private schools

By Leila B. Salaverria and Philip C. Tubeza

EDUCATION SECRETARY JESLI LAPUS wrote the warned private schools against increasing their fees too much, saying they could end up with fewer students and their losses in profits.

At the same time, an association of private elementary and high schools called for a moratorium on tuition hikes to maximize parents to keep their children in school in the financial crisis scenarios.

Rhonnalie Kasilag, president of the Federation of Accredited of Private Schools and Administrators (Fepsa), urged private schools to freeze their tuition for school year 2009-2010, saying an increase would further drag down enrollment.

Lapus said that while there was an increase in private schools' increasing their fees, they were required to consult with parents as may see in room.

He said schools should be responsive to the needs of their students and the latest he found to affect the orders institutions. He said he made the appeal to school owners in a meeting.

"I appealed to them yesterday to be backto-school smart... not to increase tuition to the point they would lose passengers. The student have options... if you fly high, you might lose students," Lapus said at the Englishtown Bids news forum.

'Find ways to cut costs'

He said some schools would avoid losing income fees aim to look at other aspects of their operation where they could cut costs.

"It's true like a president. If you know that your customers can only afford a certain level, you will look for ways to reduce the cost," he said.

Lapus said students from private schools transferred to public schools every year, but the number was not so high that he would term it an "exodus."

He pointed out that government had a program where private school students could avail themselves of help to shoulder the cost of their education.

Under the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (Compact) program, students may apply for assistance and receive P7,000 vouchers for their tuition in private high schools. The only requirement of the program is that students' parents should be willing to shoulder the rest of the tuition.

Fears of a spike in tuition and other schools fees arose because of the global financial crisis.

Fepsa's Kasilag said: "This should serve as a wake-up call. The bad economy is already affecting schools and we are convinced that increasing tuition that year may drive us out of competition."

He said parents had been asking if the private elementary schools would be increasing their fees once the new school year opens.

"That is timely, especially because parents are talking about a tuition increase this school year. This appeal to our fellow school owners is to help the parents who are in a financial crisis," Kasilag said.

Enrollment drop

Besides, Kasilag had said the financial crisis was expected to result in a big drop in enrollment and a tuition hike would only worsen the situation.

"Enrollment has been dropping the last five years and it's going to be worse this year. Some of us are even seriously thinking of closing shop and putting up grocery stores instead," said Kasilag, whose group includes 1,800 private schools in Metro Manila.

"At least the food sector is more secure and you don't have to deal with so many problems. And for those industries, food, presents priorities food for the electricals were fixed for the future," he said.

Kasilag said some private school owners were thinking of raising their tuition because they did not get enough support from the government.

The Department of Education has the Education Voucher System (EVS) where public school students affected by the classroom shortage, large class sizes, lack of teachers and instructional facilities and materials may enroll in private schools at partial government expense.

From P719 million in 1999, the allocation for the voucher program grew to P2.3 billion in 2008. In 2004, the allocation grew by as much as 161 percent after staying constant from 1999 to 2003.

But Kasilag said not all private schools get support from the voucher program because the Depdi already have vouchers slots in regions with big public high school populations like Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog.

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No fancy graduation, schools told

THERE SHOULD BE NOTHING FANCY, NO frills and no political speeches in the forthcoming graduation ceremonies of elementary and high schools, according to the Department of Education.

It's a permanent reminder by the Depdi, that it acquire particular relevance in view of the worldwide financial crisis that has led to massive layoffs and a litany of hitchhiking statistics.

In a department order dated Feb. 16, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus told school officials that graduation ceremonies should not be extravagant and should not require parents and students to shell out money, in much to possible.

"Graduation rites should be conducted in an appropriate solemn ceremony befitting the graduating students and their parents and shall not in any way be used as a venue for a political forum," the order read in part.

It specified that graduation ceremonies should be scheduled between March 20 and April 3, and should focus on the theme "My Education, My Contribution to the Future."

Years day or the Baybay or Sale boxes, Lapus told reporters that "simplicity and austerity" should be the order of the day.

The schools may invite politicians to deliver "inspirational speeches," but administrators should see to it that the events remain solemn and is not used for politicking, Lapus said.

He pointed out that if the graduating students were elementary-age kids, all the more should the speeches veer away from politics.

Public schools are not allowed to collect any graduation fees or any kind of contribution for the graduation rites, according to Lapus' order.

Parent-teacher groups may solicit voluntary contributions for ceremonies and celebrations, but the teachers and principals themselves should play no part in collecting money.

Officials are "strongly encouraged" to hold the ceremony on the school grounds, instead of resorting for "extraordinary" places.

The students should not be required to come in fancy attire that may outfall extra expenses on their part. Togas may be used, subject to the approval of the students and the parent-teacher association. Only the actual cost of renting the togs should be shouldered by the students.

Also, students should not be forced to march and participate in the procession. Graduation itself should be purely voluntary.

Schools are also prohibited from imposing recognitional project as a requirement for graduation. Leila B. Salaverria

GISELLE GILOLOY holds up the Cloud Appreciation Society's 2009 calendar whose cover features her stunning shot of a wave of clouds against a bright blue sky. JOEY SARMIENTO

On a cloudy day she saw ...

From page B-1

That photo made it to the Travel section in the July 23, 2007, issue of the Inquirer in an article written by Angelica Going. Giselle's mom and a freelance writer who had just come back from Australia to visit her daughter who works there as a geologist.

The shot would land on the cover of the 2009 calendar produced by the Cloud Appreciation Society of which Giselle is now a badge-carrying member.

That serendipitous day in 2007, when Giselle stumbled across a stunning display of summer's sunshines as she and her friend were cruising themselves on a blue South Wales beach, brought her to connect with the Cloud Appreciation Society.

English author and cloud advocate Gavin Pretor-Pinney founded the London-based organization in 2004, feeling that clouds had been "unjustly maligned."

Kelvin-Helmholtz

Giselle had e-mailed the seven-by-five photograph to her mom, who showed the shot to a friend, Ms. Laura T. David, an amateur photographer.

David promptly identified the wave as a Kelvin-Helmholtz. Pretor-Pinney termed it: our two scientists who did a study on surface waves in the 19th century), and said this type of cloud did not make mad rushes to the Philippines because of our climate.

Wondering what cloud could be amazingly patterned like breaking sea waves, as if sketched or photo-shopped by a graphic artist, and now equipped with a name to identify it, Giselle excitedly looked up references on the Internet and ended up with a website address of the Cloud Appreciation Society (http://cloudappreciationsociety.org).

"Like many others, I never knew such a society existed, nor does one completely devoted to a love for clouds," said the 31-year-old who had taken a break from her job in Sydney, which she now calls home, to spend the Christmas holidays here with her family. "I knew I had to join this one."

She sent a copy of the Kelvin-Helmholtz photo to the society along with her application form. After paying about five pounds (UK) in membership fee, she was given a badge, a certificate and a number: 12867.

The Cloud Appreciation Society has 14,170 members (as last count) living in 68 countries. This we can from the Philippines.

2009 calendar

Recalled Giselle: "Gavin asked me if it was okay to use my photo, and if I said yes, could I send them the biggest resolution of the shot?

"I had no idea they were going to use it as the cover for our 2009 calendar!"

But her "effin'," she was given five complimentary copies of the calendar (priced at almost 10 pounds) and available only in the United Kingdom), "plus a 50-percent discount if you buy anything from the Cloud Shop, including shirts, socks, mittenlets, badges or pins, even scarves—all with cloud designs, of course!"

An added compliment was when David, who holds a doctorate in marine science-physical oceanography—the first in the Philippines—asked Giselle if she could use the photograph for her lectures in the University of the Philippines.

That's quite a leap for someone whose fascination for photography started when she was five years old and was gifted with a tiny blue camera by her mom.

"I became the 'official' photographer of the family since then," said Giselle. "That meant I was the one they called on when it was somebody's birthday, when a baby was christened, for a cousin's debut, even school reunions."

The hobbyist never bothered to collect her photos in an album or scrapbook. "Mom was very good at that, as I let her do it," she said, laughing. "It was something I just loved to do, but I didn't particularly like anyone following and pacing down all together.

Outdoor shots

With one eye for the unusual, Giselle graduated from taking family and reunion shots to snapping portraits, landscapes, dogs—anything that caught her fancy.

When she moved to Australia three years ago, she indulged in her old love by capturing images of the continent's great outdoors, eventually moving from simple digital camera to her first "professional" SLR acquired two years ago, which she used to share her billions (or more) shots.

Members of the Cloud Appreciation Society (including its only nonhuman member, a sheepdog named Bibbo who stares at clouds all day) don't meet in formal gatherings but generally link up on the Internet, said the peripatetic Giselle whose love for photography has taken her around the Australian metropolis, to London, across the Atlantic landscape and to Mount Pinatubo in Zambales.

"We dial 'business,' meaning a member comments about someone else's photograph posted in our online gallery computer scene, or discuss the latest sighting about an unusual cloud formation like the Kelvin-Helmholtz, which doesn't make a frequent appearance compared to the others," she said, adding:

"If you are no artist or a poet, you can also send your artwork or poem or clouds to the Cloud Art or Cloud Poetry section. We also have some ballerina, cloud of the month selections and we encourage anyone to write in to bring in it's sheer clouds."

Cloud Collector's Handbook

Just recently, Pretor-Pinney asked Giselle to do a video short herself and her interest in cloud advocacy for a documentary to be aired over BBC in London.

And right after she returned to Sydney a month ago, she finalizing photographer again got saved from her English friends' fear Kelvin-Helmholtz photograph had been chosen from thousands of shots submitted by fellow cloud spotters as one of 126 photographs to be included in the society's latest publication, The Cloud Collector's Handbook, scheduled to come out in June.

The book, as described in an e-mail by Giselle by Pretor-Pinney and Jim Lumley, the society's photo gallery editor, is a "humorous and instructive tour of the skies that would convince the world at large of the beauty and wonder of clouds."

Converts like Giselle are thoroughly convinced that clouds are not harbingers of gloom or despair or signs of bad times ahead.

The Cloud Appreciation Society's manifesto puts it simply:

"Clouds are to contemplate that their beauty is often overlooked. They are for dreamers and their contemplation benefits the soul. Indeed, all who consider the shapes they see in them will save on psychoanalysis bills.

"And as we say it to all who'll listen: Look up, marvel at the ephemeral beauty and live life with your head in the clouds!"

Bishops quit RH bill talks

Front page A1

told the inquirer on the phone. "They insisted or just for the sake of consulting us."

The Church allows only natural family planning and considers the use of artificial contraceptives as illegal.

Castro expressed fears that the CBCP's continued participation in the committee proceedings would be misconstrued as consent.

"Nothing was happening. It seems they have already decided on the bill. The more we attend (the proceedings), the more we participate ... I would seem like we already consented [to the measure]," he said.

Castro said the Senate and House versions of the reproductive health bill were essentially the same. He said only one provision in the House bill—that penalizing midwives, doctors/nurses who refuse to refer—is not in the Senate version.

"It's all the same. It's not acceptable," he said.

Status

House Bill No. 5043 authored by Akbayan Rep. Rafael Lagman has yet to be approved on second reading and is currently under interpellation in the chamber.

Also known as the proposed Reproductive Health, Responsible Parenthood and Population Development Act of 2008, the bill promotes the use of modern and natural means of family planning.

It requires the inclusion of contraceptives in the supply purchases of government hospitals and mandatory reproductive health education in schools.

In the Senate, a number of measures covering reproduction issues appears and development and reproductive and maternal health are also pending.

In a report posted on the CBCP news website, Castro said the committee dealing with the Senate version of the reproductive health bill would have more or less the same effect as though the Catholic leadership had already accepted it.

"If, in being part of that process, we will be compromising our stance, then as of the moment we have opted not to be part of their process," Castro said.

"If participating in such hearings will entail that we are already agreeing with the reproductive health thru itself, then we will not proceed with it because in the first place, we do not accept [it]," he said.

Castro said Thursday was the first time a member of the clergy, referring to himself, attended a hearing of the technical working group deliberating on the Senate's version of the reproductive health bill.

"We respect their processes but as of now, that is our position," he said in reference to the CBCP's decision to forego any more participation in the proceedings.

It was lawyer Jo Imbong, executive secretary of the CBCP legal office, and representatives of other "pro-life" organizations who attended previous committee hearings to push for the Catholic hierarchy's position on population policy.

Church position

Castro reiterated that the CBCP was promoting only natural family planning, and was in support of values education instead of the proposed reproductive health education for school children starting in the fifth grade.

He said the CBCP was also opposing the proposed mobile reproductive health centers that would be used to facilitate family services.

"They will be using taxpayers' money, including those of Catholic taxpayers ... They will be using Catholic taxpayers' money against our own beliefs," Castro said.

But Senator Biazon denied that Castro and his group were ignored during a technical working group meeting on the reproductive health bill.

"We've been dealing with them for some time," Biazon said last night on the phone, adding that the position of the CBCP representatives would be "weighed" against the position of other stakeholders. "We have to listen to them."

Biazon, who has been tasked to sponsor the bill on the Senate floor, said the CBCP representatives would likely be invited again to another meeting.

"If they refuse to [come], that's their right. We can't impose our will on everybody," he said. "We'll continue to hear [the stands of the bill] but that's not to say that we favor one specific position."

Biazon defended the government's right to pass a reproductive health bill, citing survey results that more than 50 percent of Filipinos favored "a population policy including family planning."

"This is an affair of the State. The State must respond to the needs of the people," he said. "If the teachings of the Church are against the use of modern artificial contraceptives, the Church should teach base with their flock. They should go to the pulpit, and teach. I hope they've [ask when they do this."

'Isolated' Church

Asked to comment on Castro's remarks, Congressman Lagman said, "The Catholic Church will be isolated, unmet on laws."

Lagman said the ultimate decision on what to include in the reproductive health bill lay with the lawmakers.

He said Church officials were invited to the hearings so that they could air their side.

"You are not invited there to get what you want, but to [give] your views. If your views would not be considered ... well, what legislators think should be the national policy, you have to defer to the legislators," Lagman said in a phone interview.

Asked if the walkout could ironically the CBCP's campaign against the bill, Lagman likewise cited the same reasoning that the majority of Filipinos were supportive of the proposed law despite the Church's opposition to it.

This leaves the position of a group of professors of the Ateneo de Manila, a Catholic university run by Jesuits, who say that sex ban be a good Catholic even while supporting family planning. With reports from Leila Salaverria, TJ Burgonio and Inquirer Research

RP breast-feeding queen is German

Front page A1

host for their babies.

"The Philippines still has a long way to go in terms of accepting breast-feeding," Barth tells the inquirer in an interview.

The problem, she says, is deeply ingrained in the Filipino psyche, thanks to years of generally deceptive advertising by foreign milk companies.

No better substitute

Barth is an emergency medicine specialist from Heidelberg. After reading volumes of medical literature on breast-feeding, she says there's still no better substitute for mother's milk—especially during the first two years of life.

That's why she had no problem making accommodations now to endure any milk formula in her life-time, a key requirement in the CBI award, "Breastfeeding Queen of the Philippines," handed out by President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang.

Barth says she once turned down a P2-million offer to appear in a milk formula ad. The company had more her previous TV commercial in a diaper brand and thought that, with that stuff, pure since model was the perfect choice.

She says she has better things to do than to listen to false promises of milk companies.

Doctors in on it, too

Barth says she experienced the problem first-hand when she had her first baby, Joelle Sophie, nearly two years ago. Her second child, Lillian Julia, is four months old.

A routine consultation with a local gynecologist gave her the news that in this part of the world, breast-feeding was a thing of the past.

Go on, give your child milk formula, she was told.

Barth came to realize that techno parts, doctors, who are supposed to know better, were blinded by the promising misinformation against the benefits of breast-feeding.

To some extent, she says it's probably because some physicians are not exactly averse to accepting generous favors, usually in the form of seminars sponsorships, from giant milk companies.

Like-minded souls

Barth admits that breast-feeding is a harder to do in the Philippines than in Germany.

There is a government support program for breast-feeding mothers in Germany, she says, while the Philippines has none.

When she and her husband moved to Manila in 2005, "I were looking for a lactation consultant and couldn't find one," she recalls.

Lead she found the CBI advocacy group, Meeting like-minded souls gave a source of great comfort to Barth. It was also with the CBI that she realized the extent of commercial pressure and misinformation about breast-feeding in the Philippines.

That's when she decided to leave her medical practice and work full-time as a public health advocate. She is completing her master degree in public health at the University of the Philippines.

"I realized I could make a difference in the area of public health," Barth says.

Appalling figures

Some 16,000 Filipino children under 5 years old die monthly because they are not breast-fed, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which advocates exclusive breast-feeding within the first six months from birth.

Robbie warns on milk formula products are "7 to 25 times" more likely to die of diarrhea and "5 to 50 times" more likely to contract pneumonia than breast-fed infants.

The WHO says Filipinos spend some P22.5 billion yearly on formula milk—a figure that could be used for other necessities if they had breast-fed their babies.

Barth says alarming people about breast-feeding is best done on the grassroots level. She hopes to dispel myths on breast-feeding when she visits slum communities in Manila and Cavite.

In some cases, she says it's probably because some physicians are not exactly averse to accepting

trust she says.

The majority of women produce more than enough milk. The usual reason the baby does not get enough milk is because he is poorly latched onto the breast.

This is why it is so important to show the mother proper positioning and timing, Barth says. Breast-feeding is also more difficult at first, but becomes easier later.

Working mothers

Another common complaint, especially from working mothers, is that they do not have time to breast-feed.

Barth says one solution is for companies to create a longer maternity leave of say 4 to six months.

Working mothers have successfully continued to breast-feed and work, she adds. It just takes some planning, family and workplace support, and a breast pump.

As her case, Barth says she found a way to do so even when she was her Makati residence. She is a consultant for quality management for a number of local companies while her husband runs a consultancy firm.

Barth has two cousins, one each for her two babies, but earners she's a "breast-feeding queen."

"One important thing about breast-feeding is that you have to be available whenever your baby needs it," she says. "This way, you develop a strong bond which will help in your baby's development."

Commitment

Barth says mothers need not be shy breast-feeding in public despite the relative obscurity of breast-feeding mothers in the country. There are a few in the SM malls.

She says the idea is not necessarily to start breast-feeding one's babies while he's in Senate, first her baby while onboard a Manila-bound plane from the Middle East.

Mankind by two bulking male OFWs, she got lots of help from her roommates. One of them even executed her with a makeshift curtain.

It all depends on how committed the mother is to breast-feed, her child, she says. If there's a will, there's a way.

THE ACOSTA brothers as cadets. From left: Manuel Acosta (PMA Class '45), Pio Acosta (PMA Class '31), Melchior Acosta (PMA Class '48).

US PRESIDENT Harry S. Truman (third from left) receives a piece of Corregidor from US Army Col. Harry H. Pirsh (second left) and Maj. Manuel A. Acosta (second from right). To Truman's left is Philippine Ambassador Joaquin Elizalde.

Ties that bind RP-US relations are set in stone

From page A1

The presentation of the gift "from the people of the Philippines to the people of the United States" was attended by Ambassador Joaquin Elizalde, Consul General Emilio Abello and Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Wilma Mer. Also present were Shintaro Oe del Rosario of the Japanese International and Manuel Gonzalez of Martin Luna International.

A copy of Truman's speech and a picture of the White House ceremony gracing the presidential papers archived in the Truman Library in Kansas, Missouri.

In his short speech, Truman said the piece of stone would be seen in the Smithsonian Institution "where every American can see it when they come to Washington."

But Arturo Acosta said they were able to trace the piece of rock in the Truman Library, not the Smithsonian Institution, America's national educational and research facility located in Washington, D.C.

Rock from tunnel's mouth

According to Arturo, the rock was taken from the summit of the Malinta Tunnel which served as the seat of the Philippine Commonwealth's government under President Manuel Quezon and headquarters of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) under Gen. Douglas MacArthur after the Japanese invasion and retreat from Manila.

The cavernous tunnel is a system of bomb-proof tunnels bored out of the solid rock of the island's Malinta Hill and provided an impenetrable protection against artillery or air attack.

Constructed between 1932 and 1932, Malinta contained storage for ammunition, food and supplies, and a 1,000-bed hospital.

The heroine acquired a copy of the unpublished photos of the White House presentation ceremony as some 12,000 Philippine-based Filipino and American soldiers during World War II prepared to receive the long-overdue recognition of their sacrifices by the US government.

Death march

About 200,000 Filipinos served alongside US soldiers to defend the Philippines, a US colony at the time, from the Japanese invasion and resist the Japanese Occupation.

Thousands perished in the infamous Death March, in which the men were surrendered at the fall of Bataan in 1942 were forced by the Japanese to walk 112 kilometers from Mariveles to the concentration camps of Tarlac.

Filipino veterans who survived the war have been campaigning for decades to get back the benefits that were promised them as soldiers who served under the flag.

After the war, however, the US Congress passed the Rescission Act of 1946, stripping Filipino veterans of their status as US veterans. The move denied Filipinos the same benefits available to other US veterans.

US lawmakers sympathetic to the Filipino veterans' cause have for decades tried but failed to get a law passed by the US Congress to extend veterans' benefits to the Filipinos. It was only with the recent approval of President Obama's $787-billion stimulus package that the money was somehow found for the Filipino veterans.

Some 18,000 surviving Filipino veterans, many of them already in their 80s and 90s, are to receive a one-time compensation of $9,000, for those based in the Philippines, and $15,000 for those living in the US.

Among those who will benefit from the US financial package are members of the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor (DBC) Inc., the organization of WWII veterans who served in the battle.

Manuel A. Acosta was an active member of the DBC until his death in 2001.

Money and women: Among Ed's biggest temptations

From page A4

money are the two biggest temptations for priests entering politics, according to Dumaguete Bishop Julio Labayen.

And while he says he has successfully resisted the snares of lucre, Pueblito says jokingly that when it comes to the opposite sex, "it has to be proven yet."

Pueblito, the cleric who broke the stranglehold of traditional politicians on Dumaguete politics by running for governor and winning in 2007, recently sat for an interview with a group of bayan editorial and reporters.

"There are many temptations. The archdiocese pastor Fr. Joe Dizon said there are two. He said (he first) involved cash and I passed that trial in Mabinuburog. And then he said there's another one, women, "he said.

Palace payola

By his own and other people's reckoning, Pueblito passed the first trial in what has come to be known as the Palace payola incident. The newly elected governor and a group of local officials were attending a Malacañang function in October 2007 when he was handed a bag containing P500,000. After some hesitation, he decided to take the money as "it belonged to the people" and could be used "in a beneficial way." He also reported the incident.

As for the second, he says that so far he has not faced a moment of temptation though he readily admits that there are "many" beautiful women in Dumaguete.

Though he is no stranger from his priestly duties while taking a turn in politics, Pueblito does not cease to be a priest and still observes the priestly vow of celibacy.

"Maybe it's because I passed the first trial so the second one has yet to come," said the 55-year-old governor, known as "Among Ed" to Dumaguete.

True to his calling

Pueblito said a life of prayer, the support of civil society and fellow "gospel workers" keep him true to his priestly calling and values.

"My room is right beside a chapel so my prayers are really of great help," he said.

"We have civil society groups who are for good governance and responsible citizenship. We have interfaith gatherings so I am supported. We have prayer meetings," said Pueblito.

Temptations abound, he said, but "we, if society, parents and priests tell us what's right. Whatever you do, there will be people who will criticize you so you must decide based on what you think is right."

He believes he has to make an "unconscious to God" and the public for all his actions while in office.

Though Pueblito did not mention it, there is the temptation of power to which every politician has succumbed.

Throughout the interview, there were tantalizing hints of the possibility of staying for national office, including the biggest prize of all, the presidency.

Moral leadership

Pueblito said there was a dearth in the country for "ethical and moral leadership" and confessed that some groups have approached him, urging him to run for "whatever, vice president or president."

But he said that he would only run for national office if there is no other credible candidate.

"If we see that there is someone who will fill up (the post), why would I force myself? I have no political ambition. I will not present myself," he said.

"If (Chief Justice Reynato) Puno agrees (to run), if (Mayor Jejomar) Binay agrees, why would I volunteer myself? I am not a politician. I am a priest. I am a priest in politics," he said.

While his preference would be to return to the Church after his term ends next year, Pueblito's open to the possibility of running for reelection as governor.

"If God wants it, why not? It's up to Him but if we see that there is someone who can continue our work, then I'll withdraw," he said.

"I would not have joined (politics) if I did not believe that this was what God wanted. So it has become a mission for me. It is a mission that if I don't undertake (it), something wrong will happen," he said.

Cory speech was turning point of Edsa

From page A1

Edsa corner Ortigas avenue.

Aquino then showed up on a makeshift stage at the PDEA at around 4:30 p.m. of Feb. 24, Day 3 of the revolt. The talk was over in minutes, but for Binay and the other party ex-lax present, hearing in that brief appearance, it was enough to send a powerful message.

Asserting her leadership

"That was a turn in history. That was Cory asserting her leadership," Binay said in an interview with the Inquirer yesterday.

To explain why there was a need for her to make that "assertion," Binay had to retrace the earlier events of the day.

Since the standoff began, he and fellow human rights lawyer Joker Arroyo were already leading tactical forces in their fight, but that pre-dawn meeting of Feb. 24 they were inside one of the buildings in Camp Crame for a "meeting" with the rebel forces.

Binay vividly remembered that it was the same meeting an Air Force helicopter was led by Col. Antonio Rivera delivered leaflets (that he and fellow Cory loyalists dropped on Camp Crame to join the rebels.)

Out of the loop

"Joker was in the (meeting) room and I was roaming outside talking to (Sen.) Freddie Aguilar," he recalled. "Where Joker finally came out, he told me: 'Makibang malapit na tayo (Let's fight closer).' Sabi ko (I said), 'Bakit (Why)?' Sabi niya (He said), 'Kasi (because) Cory is not here physically.' They were calling the (Enrile) enclosure, the palace, they were calling the shots," Binay recalled, Joker telling him.

Leaving the camp, the two lawyers walked all the way to a colleague's house on Scout-Borromeo Drive in Diliman City and from there, contacted Aquino by phone. The day before (Feb. 23), Aquino had quietly returned from Cebu and was staying at a friend's house in Wack Wack subdivision in Mandaluyong.

Coming out

By 10 a.m. that morning, Arroyo, Binay other key Aquino supporters were gathered for a meeting at Greenhills, San Juan. Aquino was personally briefed by Joker about his earlier meeting in Camp Crame and about the series of alarm events which "calling the shots," Binay said.

"The long and short of it is this Cory said on: 'Lalabas tayo (We're coming out).' Binay told the Inquirer.

But someone butted in. "Cory, pause na tayo. Baka madiyaryuhan ka pa (We've already won. You might only get yourself in danger)."

Aquino's stand

Aquino then replied, as Binay put it: "Alexis ka ba ang kaapu-apuhan ko (Are you the descendant of mine)? Sabi niyan nga (this is what I remember), ang sabi niya (he said) that we would sacrifice me first if we need to? Why the change?"

The duly elected President of the February 1986 snap elections had given her stand, and "nobody dared to disagree with her (aside sang kaniya-kaniya)," Binay said.

Aquino then asked his younger brother Jose "Peping" Cojuangco—who is that morning affectionately addressed her as "Ate (elder sister)"—to look for a spot on Edsa where she could address the crowd.

Coverage against snipers

Why was the PDEA building chosen? For one, he fondly allowed a wide view of the operations but still provided ample overhead coverage against "snipers," Binay explained.

Asked how Edsa I would have turned out had Aquino met "resistance" that day, Binay said the initial sense of his group was that a "rebellion" or a "millitarist leader ship"—rather than the Aquino presidency as Filipinos now know it—could have risen to power.

The following day, Feb. 25, at 11:45 a.m., Corazon Aquino took her oath as President at Club Filipino.

Last-minute glitch

But Binay recalled that even that climactic moment of Edsa I encountered a last minute glitch—though not because of forces crawling to the renegade military machinery holding fort at Camp Crame.

It was because of a breakdown of another piece of machinery: the vehicle that was supposed to take Aquino from Wack Wack to Club Filipino—that morning simply wouldn't start and had to be towed first, delaying the oath-taking ceremony by about half-an-hour, Binay said, smiling.

CALLING THE SHOTS were Fidel Ramos and Juan Ponce Enrile

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OPINION

Fourth World

INSTEAD OF "REACHING FIRST WORLD STATUS BY 2020," as the administration dreams for the country, we may actually be sinking into Fourth World status, about to join the ranks of failed states like Zimbabwe. Consider the country's being squeezed between a large rock and an immovable wall. On one hand, engaging in aggressive stonewalling against the United States, all in the hope—in vain as it turned out—of forcing Hillary Clinton to pay that country attention during her Asian tour. And on the other, bowing to domestic pressure in formalizing our claim to the Spratlys while obfuscating, to a very public moment, China, the native-the former administration considers an antidote to the declining affections of Washington.

In truth, the Philippine cause is good and just in both cases: the country has every right to insist on its sovereign prerogative concerning convicted rapist Daniel Smith; and it has the moral and legal obligation to define the national territory in as advantageous a manner as possible, by various of legislation that fortifies those claims in the international legal arena. But the manner in which both have been done is both cynical and haphazard, and without an attempt to build a public consensus based on a clear vision of the national interest.

In the case of the much debated, though much required, legislation to amend the Philippines the advantages of straddling itself of the legal coverage of its declaration of the portion of the Spratlys as a region of islands, there is a May deadline set by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for member-countries to define their territorial waters. And we have complied with it in typical fashion—by means of a legislative photo-finish.

China roared to the Philippines' legislation, which President Macapagal-Arroyo has shown every sign of signing into law. We do not know, and deserve to know, if an administration that has latched on to China in an antidote to Washington and as a source of much-needed investments (without the usual Western conditions on transparency and good governance) were through the medium of selling the Chinese of the law's expected passage. This is something the public deserves to know because it would go a long way in selling an understandably unanswered public, if China is merely engaging in rhetorical fire-breathing, as if the administration bungled in any less ramshackly manner-taking an otherwise friendly state.

To be sure, a ferocious response from Beijing was to be expected. The question is, what consequences, if any, will there be because of the passage of the law? We do not foresee any outright aggression on China's part; but on the other hand, we believe that both Congress and the President, if they hold firm, deserve at least some credit for not submerging, but rather, strengthening the Philippine hand in dealing with international bodies and involving to our full national benefit, international covenants and conventions that the Philippines participated in ratifying.

But what comes next? We know from events over the past decade or so, that our nation's alliance with Washington does not cover American support for the Philippines if any hostilities actually break out in the Spratlys. Nothing suggests—even though the present Democratic administration in the United States will more likely be a little more confrontational (but not much) with Beijing and more interested in Southeast Asia than the Bush government—that Washington's attitude toward our claim will change.

The Ramos administration had put in place a managed-no policy that put a premium on the Asean, principally as a basic, negotiating a settlement to the various conflicting claims of nations. That policy, however, for all interests and purposes, has been shelved over since the present administration decided to accede to China's preference for bilateral or even trilateral—but not China-Asean—negotiations covering the Spratlys. The new legislation naturally puts our claim at odds with those of everybody else's, and not just China's. Therefore the country also deserves to know what, if any, our diplomatic policy is going to be. Are we standing by the Asean policy or junking it, or subsequently muddying it beyond recognition?

And what are the implications of the new policy? Our neighbors, too, will want to know, and it would reflect poorly on our standing as a responsible member of the Asean if we appear to be hurtling from one attitude to the next, without any apparent rhyme or reason, supporting our officials' behavior.

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Sleeping on the job

SEPARATE OPINION

Raganit A. Cruz

LAST TUESDAY I FINISHED WRITING MY AR-ticle for today and had just printed it prior to emailing it to this paper when I received the morning news. It told me that the cabinet had written had become obsolete and would have to be replaced.

In that original piece, I criticized the World Bank for its refusal to give more information against the persons who had reportedly conspired the award for the public works contracts in the building in the Philippines. All it mentioned was the names of some of the supposedly guilty parties, without more. That was like the executive privilege of President Diosdado Macapagal-Arroyo that Romulo Neri had invoked before the Supreme Court that summoned him.

From the pronouncements of the Senate I watched the other week, it appeared that the body was uncertain about the whereabouts of the World Bank in sharing its evidence against the Filipino scalawags. Considering that among the suspects it summoned was Jose Miguel Arroyo, the husband of the President unanimously called the Pinoy Executive, the World Bank was hardly expected to cooperate. Our constitutional provisions on transparency would have to yield to the charters of that foreign institution, and in no case necessary at that.

On signal all that, there was the justification that could be invoked by the Senate for its resolution to going against the suspected felons. This was the decision of Justice Florentino Feliciano of the Supreme Court in the case of Senate vs. Ermita. His position, who seems to be more powerful than the Supreme Court of the Philippines, had ruled that his position was in defense confidential and could not be required to attend a stressful investigation at much risk to his life.

He is not sentimental against going to the golf links where he is not likely to confront Jose de Venecia III or answer incriminating questions. Playing golf is a relaxing exercise that soothes the brain cells and makes one forget the troubles of the world. Besides, he is not likely to be subpoenaed by the Senate to testify in the case of the NBN-ZTE deal, which is now pending before the Supreme Court.

All this seems to have excused Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez from taking more aggressive action against the latest aberration that has provoked the impatience of the public. The Senate seems to sympathize with her for blaming the World Bank for its unwillingness to help the Philippine government indict those unidentified automobiles. The senators seem to have joined hands with her in complaining that they can do nothing without the vital evidence the World Bank will not disclose.

All these have may look academic now because of the latest report that the World Bank representative here has assured the senators that he will provide them—and Ombudsman Gutierrez too—with the information they seek to bring the erring "commissioners" to justice. Let's wait and see as this may be like the Romulo-Neri forensic argument.

In any case, the Ombudsman should not sit and wait until somebody files a complaint for her to act. The Constitution, in its Art. XI, Sec. 12(1) obligates the Office of the Ombudsman "to investigate, on its own or on complaint by any person, any act or omission of any public officer, employee, office or agency when such act or omission appears to be illegal, unjust, improper or inefficient." Business says there is no need to act on her own nor has she heard any complaint from the Senate, or any one else for that matter, to make her act at all.

Bureaucrats in this country are not like those in the United States where they are not only to accuse probable offenders but, even before that, to prevent the commission of crimes and, on their own initiative, to gather the needed evidence to convict the guilty. This is what the Ombudsman should do with the suspicions raised by the World Bank against the Filipino "brokers" they know but may not want to indicted.

It was this kind of courage against the racketeers in New York City that catapulted District Attorney Thomas E. Dewey to national prominence as governor of his state and made him the presidential candidate of the Republican Party against Franklin D. Roosevelt and, later, Harry S. Truman. The "little man on the wedding cake," as Dorothy Parker had mockingly called him, was first and foremost he himself. He gave no lee-way to the Mafia. Even later in private life, he remained a respected public figure for his devotion to duty with all its perils and challenges.

Ombudsman Gutierrez will not acquire a similar distinction among it can in her harmless office while the criminals roam free like the "forty per centers" in the World Bank. She cannot expect the people to voluntarily confess but should herself do her best, on her own initiative, to look them up in the penitentiary. This is her constitutional responsibility. She is the head of the prosecutorial and is higher than all of them. Built in the Department of Justice that she can be removed from it only through the special process of impeachment for dereliction of duty.

Criminals abound in our country because those in authority have a cat in their operations, do not dare offend influential persons, are afraid of their intimidation and vengeance, and—or, but foolishly effective—choose to do absolutely nothing on the innocent premise of seeing nothing is punish or refrain.

It is time to jump start our selectively dormant government. And let us begin with the cobwebs in the Office of the Ombudsman.

No walls, no ceilings, no floors

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STUFF U TOLD ABOUT A PSYCHIATrist who told his patient: "I am glad you are making progress!"

The patient replied: "You call this progress! Six months ago, I was God. Now, I'm nobody!"

* * *

In today's Gospel (MK.2, 1-12), we have of the story about a nobody, an unheard of, simple person who became the center of attraction when Jesus stopped, singled him out from the crowd, and healed him before their very eyes. A nobody became, and was treated, like God. Here something to know that in God's heart, none of us is a nobody. Each one of us is a someone. How amazing to know that each one of us, no matter how lowly or small, is worth shopping for.

* * *

Years ago, there was a song with these lyrics: "Love has no walls, no ceilings, no floors." How true. With love, it is never a period, but always a comma. There is always room for one more. In the Philippines, especially in the past decade, this becomes very evident in the way all sorts of means of transport are filled to the max to accommodate anyone and everyone. A good question to ask ourselves today is if we have become so locked up in ourselves or that people can no longer approach or come near us. In other words, have we become unreachable? Are we no longer within the reach of people? Are we no longer within the "coverage area"?

* * *

We take time today to remember and thank for the many people who entered us to God, who brought us closer to Him, who accompanied us, and who continue to accompany us in our journey. Let us be grateful to the many countless people who opened the door for us so that we could receive God's healing, forgiveness, and blessings. For them we pray for God's graces and benefit.

* * *

Have you brought anybody closer to God? Have you accompanied anyone to God's heart? Has life all been about I, me, and myself? Has life all been about making more money and more money by any means, and by whatever means?

* * *

In humility, today, we also ask forgiveness for all those times we became a block instead of a guide to people we chose as way to Him. Instead of leading them to God, we often have misled and confused them, or even scandalized and disillusioned them. We ask for forgiveness especially for the times we led people to ourselves, in the name of public service, in the name of love of country, and even in the name of God.

* * *

This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent. We observe Ash Wednesday to remind ourselves that you and I are dust and to dust we will return. Life is short. Life will end. Everything is passing. Eternity is waiting. Like the parable in today's Gospel, may we all experience true forgiveness and healing. Let us join to heart the basic message of Lent: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel."

* * *

"You can see forgiven." When was the last time you heard this said to you? How sweet it is to know that our mistakes and failures in the past can be absolved and that we can start all over again. Fresh start, huge, and new beginnings. That's what Lent is all about. And it all begins with honesty and humility.

* * *

It is interesting to note that the paralytic was lowered with his mat from the roof by four men, but after he was healed, Jesus ordered him to rise, pick up his mat and go home. I wonder why Jesus did not say: "Why did Jesus order him to pick up his mat? What was the meaning or significance of the mat? Perhaps you can share your thoughts and insights about it.

* * *

People who have been healed or forgiven or blessed must not forget their payback to the Lord. There is a reason, there is a mission for anything that happens in our lives. Remember, to whom much is given, much is also required. "What is it that you ask of me, Lord?" This should be our constant prayer especially in this season of Lent.

* * *

PHILIPPINE 100 CENTENNIAL SOJOURN: I first saw Fr Tomas Parone, SVD, when I was a first year high school seminarian at Christ the King Seminary in the mid '60s, and I must admit that it was quite early in the morning with a disfigured face walking very slowly in the corridor, in his cassock. I found out later on that his whole body was burned while he was facing his jeep one night in his convento in Mindoro. My first natural reaction admiration when I found out that he celebrated the Eucharist for hours continuously for hours and hours in Quiapo Church, rain or shine. He never talked too much. He was just a silent presence in our midst. Yet, they say little who can much. What a privilege to have met such a loving and dedicated missionary.

* * *

You are invited to participate in a psychospiritual retreat on "Understanding and Healing Transgenerational Patterns and Wounded Relationships" at the OLS Retreat House in Tagaytay or Sto. Tomas from March 1, 2009. The retreat will be facilitated by Fr. Ed Pagsuc, OSA (0917.541.4180).

* * *

Inviting you to a Lenten Recollection "Journey to the Heart" on Feb. 26, 2009, Saturday, 1-6 p.m. at the Maryhill School of Theology, Gilmore corner E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Mariblo, Diliman City. Free admission. There will be a Mass and healing session, too, with Fr. Ernie Manuben.

* * *

Ramsay Musallam invites you to a lay forum on "How to Improve Your Eyesight," at Jameson Hall, Christ the King Seminary on Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. For inquiries please call 3712282 or 09.174.167.849.

* * *

A moment with the Lord.

Lord, help me to live with no guilt, no regrets, no fears, amen.

Win for veterans; remedies for VFA

LAST FEB. 9, THE DAY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL in Washington, D.C., Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo realized one. He lamented that media had ignored the real purpose of President Macapagal-Arroyo's second side trip to the United States. Recall that from the Davos World Forum in Switzerland (and a few other cities), GMA flew to Washington for a "courtesy" homer on originally planned. He read that media unfairly pilloried GMA's obligatory "shuttle diplomacy" of US President Barack Obama.

Main purpose of FS trip: Romulo explained then, at the recommendation of our Ambassador to the United States, Willy T. Gaa, he pushed CARE to get to Washington because the US Congress was then hurriedly debating the gargantuan economic stimulus package proposed by President Obama. He advised her to meet with US congressional leaders to make sure that the long-delayed compensation for the Filipino evacuees of World War II be included in the stimulus package.

Thus, according to the perused foreign secretary, GMA met with Senators Daniel Inouye, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee; Daniel Akaka, chair of the Senators Affairs Committee; John Kerry, chair of the Foreign Relations Committee; and also Mr. Obama's chief of the Sub-Committee on East Asia and Pacific Affairs, who all "promised to help her fulfill her mission."

In the US House of Representatives, she spoke with Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Congressman Steve Austria (the first first-generation Filipino-American member of the US lower house) who both "assured her of their full support."

She also conferred with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whose photo-op with her was carried extensively in TV and newspaper reports. The attendance of GMA at the National Prayer Breakfast—though given much publicity—was only an incident, not the main agenda, of her US trip, as Secretary Romulo said.

Congratulations but more work needed. I must admit that, given the wide publicity of her alleged bragging of Obama, I was not too personal

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban

ed—at that time—that the veterans' issue propelled GMA's recent visit to America. But this week's headline stories concerning the allotment of $789 million from the $787 billion stimulus package) to compensate some 19,000 Filipino World War II veterans, convinced me that GMA's US trip was well-worth the effort.

Perhaps, the watered public distrust of GMA's administration as shown by repeated poll surveys and the inadequate reporting of her US visit contributed to the skepticism of her US agenda. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Her mission was accomplished. The six decades-of effort to correct an injustice to some war heroes finally succeeded.

To quote Sen. Inday Sotto, the amounts awarded are "too little and too late." But I think they are only welcome. I just hope that the urged by the Department of National Defense (DND) will continue to lobby for a much bigger award. In the meantime, let me give credit to whom credit is due. Well done, Madam President! Congratulations, Secretary Romulo and Ambassador Gaa!

I also join the heroes adhered the other day calling on Senator Inouye for his steadfast support.

* * *

Legal and diplomatic solutions to VFA. On May 17, 2006, during my term as chief justice, I ruled—accompanied by one then Ambassador to the US Alfred del Rosario—some 15 Supreme Court justices in Washington, D.C. to meet three congressmen in the Global Forum on Liberty and Prosperity that our high court was sponsoring later that year.

Declining my invitation, US Justice Antonin Scalia—the leader of the conservatives who often dominates the US Supreme Court—explained, "... I am useless in international meetings because I believe that our Supreme Court is called to enforce only the US Constitution and US laws, not cross-border concepts that do not find implementing US statutes."

This is why I was not surprised by the US Court's ruling in Medellin vs Texas (Mar. 25, 2008) that a treaty becomes effective in the United States only when it is enforced in the United States, unless (1) "by its terms," it is self-executory, or (2) it is implemented by an act of the US Congress.

In a commentary published in the Inquirer's front page last Feb. 14, I opined that, based on this ruling, the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) is not enforceable in the United States because (1) the US Senate had not ratified it; (2) nothing in the VFA says it is "self-executory," and (3) no US law implements it.

Per Ambassador Ernie Gonsey, the VFA has "the force of a treaty," but sadly, per the US Supreme Court, this treaty does not have the force of a US domestic law. For this and the other reasons detailed in that commentary, the VFA violates our Constitution and is also unenforceable here. Hence, our government should initiate moves to abrogate it, or in the very least to renegotiate its objectionable features, as urged by Senator Sotto.

But to solve the diplomatic standoff now plaguing Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith's custody, our courts should decide the appeal of his conviction as soon as possible. In the meantime, Smith would either be unconditionally jailed in the Philippines if it materialized, as feared if acquitted. That is a diplomatic solution without loss of face for the both the Philippines and US governments.

A diplomatic remedy suggested by the US Supreme Court itself is for the US Congress to pass an executory law implementing (Sotto's) urged law by the United States, including—if I may humbly suggest—the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty and the revised VFA.

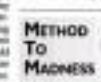
* * *

Comments are welcomed at: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Here be dragons

IT BEGINS, OF COURSE, WITH A ONCE UPON A TIME.

Once upon a time, there was a King, and his fair Queen. They say that the King was once wise and just, but power corrupted him, and the world listened to him. His Queen, once as pure as a pearl, was blinded by the gold and adoration and the glitter of diamonds on her neck. And on for many years, the land wept, those islands many called the pearl of the orient seas. Many



METHOD TO MADNESS

Patricia Evangelista

years lost in the grim battle against the ruthless King.

One warrior, more clever, braver than all the rest, raised his fist against the King and threw down the challenge. For years he held his ground, standing from a lonely cell to a lonely jail, allowed only moments with the sweet smiling woman he loved and the small children who called his name. It was a long time, a thousand spun a thousand nights, until the King and Queen met the warrior away, across the blue Pacific. But even then, no one would be forgotten. Into chains, muffled with the tearing silence.

But the warrior returned, in spite of his beloved's pleas. Despite threats against his life. His place was there, he said, home to the motherland, under the shadows that cradled a yellow sun. He came home one day, flying home on the wings of morning. When the silence rang out, they found his cell empty, his arms outstretched, his blood soaking into the land he loved.

There was a new major in the land, one that began with a murmur, and spread in whispers among the many who felt hope at word of the warrior's return. They saw his widow, whose sweet smile would never be the same again. They saw him that widow took her hand. Into the ruined low seats he sighed the king, to they followed her, thousands of them, millions of them, until that one bright day when the last grand battle was waged on the streets of the city, where warm challenged rifle to the noise of the warrior's widow. They were her soldiers, thousands and thick, student and father, the old men and the young girls. For her they took before dragon and sang beneath swords. They while the whole world watched, King and his Queen quailed before the warrior's widow, and fled with their diamonds and their rifles and the voice of the people singing in celebration.

And so it happened in a country they call the pearl of the orient, that a nation slowly awakened a nation, and a warrior's hand met its people free.

* * *

It was the story I heard when I was eight years old, seven years after the revolution in Edsa. I remember sitting in class in my navy-blue skirt and my white blouse with the tiny navy blue ribbon on the collar, and my brand-new shoes that I hated, the shiny and white blouses, listening to the plump Mrs. Chua—who had tiny-dusted eyes and were too much blush-on on her cheeks—talk about Ferdinand Marcos and the long grim years of the conjugal dictatorship. I remember carefully copying down in my neat and blue-lined notebook the names of the dead and the disappeared. I remember Mrs. Lumen-lee how Mrs. Chua talked about her, about Mrs. Aquino...with the reverence of someone who speaks of the Virgin Mary: it was Cory who brought the country together, Cory who was hurt and suffering, whose husband was stolen from her, it was Cory who did not cry.

Many years ago, in the classroom, do not tell children the dragons are dead. We already know that dragons exist. Fairy tales tell us that the dragons can be killed.

I remember the two painted lines in yellow chalk, on the blackboard right next to the fractions. Edsa, Mrs. Chua said, that is Edsa. I did not know what Edsa was at eight, so underneath those two lines I wrote down: Edsa. Panama. I remember how one was set of road, but of a battleground, surrounded by tanks, crowded with soldiers, crammed with millions of brave fighters, led by a woman both saint and crusader, lover and mother. And it was that woman, bright-smiled, soft-eyed Cory Aquino, who stayed in my mind's eye at the ringing of the bell every morning, who I imagined every time I walked through the school hallways: Land of the morning, pearl of the east, cradle of the brave. The brave were yellow in my imagination, yellow dresses and big glasses and bad dirt white hands. She looked over my dreams long after Ramon Revilla ran out of magic wars, long after Prince Charming fell off his dancing and Arthur crapped being the sons and Robin Hood's men all turned out to be thieves. The princesses in my story, it had all the figure of magic—the endless evening, the fire of the nation, the hotel lace, the pure, white-themed heroine...and most importantly, the necessary real: good storytelling ever end. And because it was real, it was possible.

There are many things that have changed since I first heard Cory many years. Too many, after all, always depends on who tells it and for what purpose. The happy ending is still a long time coming. But on days like this, it does not matter because of her, I still have silver dragons.

* * *

This article was first published as an essay for the book "Cory: An Intimate Portrait," edited by Margie Ortuzar Aduca. This is the article in its original form.

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Juliet's story

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

LET'S CALL HER JULIET AT THE MOMENT. SHE is what might be called an out-of-school youth, forced to drop her studies as a high school senior at the Lapu-Lapu National High School because of ... case of rape and abuse she has filed against a male teacher and the school's male principal.

Why rape issues have taken so many years to be resolved have been thrown against us; examples are the Subic rape case (which I was personally involved in) where only her daughter has halted her studies. Juliet is the eldest of Nanay's five children (five youngest is just a baby), and the four siblings are at present with her own family. Nanay's husband, a driver for the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Lapu and one time his motorcycle was bumped by another vehicle under suspicious circumstances. Fearing for their safety, Nanay and Juliet are now sheltering with an NGO, which is the way to go for those in hard pinches.

This is Juliet's story.

In March last year, her younger sibling was set to graduate from grade school. Her mother asked her to follow up their graduation requirements, the payment of her graduation portrait being her duty. Juliet failed to collect any payments. Wanting to help her parents raise the P500 they needed for her younger sister's graduation, Juliet approached a male classmate who was the son of a businessman who would be able to lend her some money. The classmate mentioned a Mr. E who was a teacher in their school and who was known to have lots of money and a penchant to lure them into sexual trysts. Approaching Mr. E was the only option open to Juliet, so she saw around the campus. Juliet told him that she wanted to borrow some money. The teacher then told her that it wouldn't look good for others to see him handing her money and told her to follow him to the principal's office. Juliet followed Mr. E into the principal's office, Juliet found herself being asked personal questions about her family and other matters, and when she asked Mr. A for the cash reason for her summoning to the principal's office, Mr. A rose from behind his desk and forced her down on a sofa, caressing her, lifting her skirt and touching her private parts. He also tried to rape her, but when she cried out, he stopped and let her go, telling her to keep quiet about what happened.

* * *

JULIET says she wanted to keep everything a secret because I was really scared of him," Juliet recalls. But some months later, while in school, Mr. P summoned her and told her that the principal, Mr. A, wanted to see Juliet in his office. Juliet became very nervous, suspecting that the principal was also out to rape her. Juliet asked her classmates to accompany her to the principal's office, Juliet found herself being asked personal questions about her family and other matters, and when she asked Mr. A for the real

TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to jsarmiento2@inquirer.com.ph

Celso Juan F. Sarmiento Jr.

FACEBOOK ME

Social networking for beginners

By Erwin Oliva
Inquirer.net

JUST A FEW YEARS ago, you could hear people say, "Call me" when they want to keep in touch. Later, it evolved into "E-mail me," and with the explosion of mobile phones, "Text me."

Thanks to the Internet, people are now connecting and interacting with friends and family through online social networks.

Just to give you an idea how big social networks are, MySpace has over 164.1 million members, according to "5 Fastest Social Networking Sites" published by Hitwise, an online research engine for people.

Music

MySpace is an online social network, which was initially directed at musicians and fans. But it now one of the most popular online communities for sharing and publishing music.

MySpace is by far the largest online community with 137 member profiles created every minute, according to the Hitwise article. But that's just one. There is a long list of social networks and listing them can already make one anxious.

One of the fast-growing online social networks is Facebook, which was created by Mark Zuckerberg and co-founders Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin in their Harvard dorm rooms in 2004.

Community

But before we jump into the discussion of more members, you might be wondering, "What is an online social network?" Simply put, it's an online community. When the Internet was invented back in the 1960s, it was really meant to connect computers and networks, people.

As the cost of computers went down, as the Internet became less of the geeks' domain, the online world found ways to improve itself. When e-mail was invented, newsgroups and "Internet" emerged, allowing people to form communities around topics of interest.

Up until now, I'm still a member of a few newsgroups in Yahoo! and Google. Interest are still around but they've been replaced by more user-friendly services like Google groups. Another form of online community that emerged during the early years of the Internet was the bulletin board services, a text-based online forum.

Classmates

People freely discussed different topics under this virtual nook. You could choose from a host of topics.

When the web arrived, other forms of online communities were born. In 1995, Classmates.com was created. This was an online community of former schoolmates.

Two years later, Sixdegrees.com was established, which allowed people to have direct relations to connect online. These early forms of online social networks allowed registered users to create profiles and send e-mail messages to anyone on their "friends list" and find other people with similar interests, group-tagging tastes, among other things.

Since online profiles included very personal information, people eventually befriended people based on common likes.

Global village

In short, online social networks became Marshall McLuhan's version of the Global Village, except this is online.

Now, let's go back to Facebook, which was created seven years after SixDegrees.com. Now an some fast facts again. More than 200 million active users.

An average user has 120 friends (I have close to 700 friends to date.) People all over the world spend more than three billion minutes on Facebook each day. That's a lot of time for something that exists in the virtual cyber.

Obama inauguration

Why are we going yaga over Facebook?

Before US President Barack Obama's inauguration, CNN and Facebook announced an interesting experiment. This experiment eventually allowed millions of people to witness the inauguration online. OK, that's not new.

But what Facebook added was a new dimension to online interactivity. As we witnessed Obama make a mistake while taking his oath, I saw some of my Facebook friends reacting to it in a special window right next to the online streaming video of Obama.

Historic

People were chatting through a Facebook application snapped into the streaming video coming from CNN Online. I found at least 20 of my Facebook friends located in different parts of the country and the world chatting and witnessing this historic event. That couldn't have been possible without Facebook.

As I was writing this, a new e-mail message came into my inbox. It was a message from Facebook notifying me that one of my Baguio friends was commenting on an old photo posted by another friend several weeks ago. We were all guessing when the photograph was taken.

Interactive

Similar to the most popular predecessors like Friendster and Multiply, Facebook is commercial. It changing how we interact with friends, family and even colleagues at work. Apart from what I already mentioned, Facebook has become an endless canvass of online interactivity.

You can play games, invite friends to events, join a bulletin, start a campaign or an online campaign, and share photos, blogs and other content.

Photo sharing is one of the top activities in this online social network, apart from sharing videos you find on YouTube.

Young, mostly women

One interesting fact from "5 Facts about Social Networking Sites" is that the younger population of online social networks seem to predominantly women. Readers have been joining social networks are getting younger in Asia.

Worse trends indicate that kids today are growing in a world where online social networks are now part of their lives. Just like the mobile phone phenomenon, online social networks are changing the way we live, work and play.

So the next time, one tells you, "Facebook me," don't fret. They just want to connect.

How to open a Facebook account

There are numerous online social networks to choose from, but for purposes of discussing how to join one, we choose Facebook.

1 First, go to facebook.com. You do this by opening your Internet browser (Firefox or Internet Explorer), and type, www.facebook.com.

2 After Step 1, you will be taken to the Facebook website. Fill in the details needed in the "Sign Up" section of the webpage.

3 The Sign Up page will ask for your full name, e-mail address, your preferred password, your gender and birthday. Once that's done, click on the "sign up" tab.

4 Facebook will ask you to type two random words as part of a "security check." This makes sure that a person is actually joining.

5 Wait for a few seconds until Facebook tells you to check your e-mail to confirm your registration.

6 In your e-mail, check the link that is included in the message sent to you by Facebook.

7 After Step 6, you will be directed back to Facebook. Just follow every instruction. (There are at least four steps to complete your registration, but you can skip some of them.)

8 After Step 7, you're done. You're now a member of Facebook. You can now start modifying your profile and adding friends.

Top 10 online social networks

Disclaimer: This is a list of the top 10 social networks but the order can vary, depending on the source of the site statistics. This list, however, will give you an idea about the top social networking websites being visited by people worldwide.

Facebook. A fast-growing social networking website. It is currently second behind MySpace in terms of number of visitors. In terms of number of visits, it follows in January 2009 alone, this website is No. 1.

MySpace. This website is Web's music leader. From indie bands to professional ones, you can find them here. But when it comes to visitors, it's second to Facebook. This website is kept slipping in the ranking. To date, it has more than 200 million registered users.

Twitter. This microblogging social networking service allows people to send friends 140-character messages, similar to what we can send via our mobile phone's SMS feature. If we're going to look at the numbers from compete.com, 14 million people worldwide visit this website for many months.

Flixster. A social network site for movie lovers, I must say. Also a fast-growing site that has over 50 million visitors a month.

LinkedIn. People joke that this website is the most formal and "boring" social network out there because it targets professionals wanting to connect with other professionals. But based on compete.com, it has been getting 47 million visitors every month. This is a social network for businessmen, too.

Tagged. Tagged (you're it, by the way) is a social network that allows you to create invitations from tagged.com. There perhaps you're one of the 28 million monthly visitors it has.

This social networking website is popular in Brazil, Portugal, India, Pakistan and Greece. It has over 52 million registered users and about 5 million monthly visitors.

The list goes on.

Visitor changes very quickly.

Another list

Here's another list compiled by compete.com:

1 facebook.com
2 myspace.com
3 twitter.com
4 flixster.com
5 linkedin.com
6 tagged.com
7 classmates.com
8 hi5.com
9 friendster.com
10 orkut.com
11 imeem.com
12 ning.com
13 multiply.com
14 bebo.com
15 ws.com
16 vkontakte.ru
17 odnoklassniki.ru
18 hyves.nl
19 xanga.com
20 360.yahoo.com
21 orkut.com
22 windowslive.com
23 flickr.com
24 myyearbook.com
25 doostang.com

Erwin Oliva, Inquirer.net

Across the NATION

Army admits playing key role in anti-Red groups

DAVAO CITY—THE MILITARY YESTERDAY ADmitted that it played a key role in the resurgence of an anticommunist group in Davao del Sur.

Farley village officials in Matanao, Bansalan and villages of Digos City—where communist rebels are known to operate—confirmed that they were inviting the Alsa Masa, an anticommunist group that ran, in remembered to awakening the New People's Army (NPA) in Southern Mindanao during the 1980s.

Digos City village and city officials, including Mayor Ronnie Lutazo, said the revival of the anticommunist movement was a purely civilian effort.

But Col. Lyndon Buslon, commander of the troops in the infantry battalion based in Davao del Sur, said the military was indeed behind efforts to organize an antiinsurgency movement in the province.

In fact, Buslon said they have already secured the "go-signal" from the Barangay Defense System (BDS) to activate 10 villages of the province.

He said they were hoping to cover all the villages of Digos City and Bansalan.

While also admitting that the BDS was patterned after the Alsa Masa of the 1980s, Buslon said its members are "unarmed."

"BDS is sort of an Alsa Masa but they are not just intended to fight the NPA. They will also become helpful in maintaining the peace and order of the community. They will even be helpful in reporting simple troubles, like domestic issues—for the proper agencies and barangay officials to step in," Buslon said.

He said they will be "hands-on" in the affairs of the military against the rebels, including the manning of BDS centers.

"They will carry around their communities as they act as the military's eyes and ears," he said.

Ka Simon Santiago, political department director of the NPA, Southern Mindanao, said the military recruits BDS "by force and at gunpoint."

"If these villagers refuse to become members, they will be suspected of being supporters of the NPA. Afraid that the military will get back at them, as their reluctant signals their supposed support for the revolutionary movement, they are forced to enlist and participate," he said.

But Buslon said the military was not forcing villagers to enlist in the BDS.

"We cannot (recruit) them into becoming members of the BDS if they refuse to. We cannot force. If the local leaders will allow us to organize, then we will organize," he said.

Santiago said civilians should stay away from the BDS or they will become the targets for the NPA, too.

To prove it was serious, NPA rebels burned two BDS centers in Sibulan in Sta. Cruz town on Saturday last week.

NPA rebels have stepped up attacks on government and military targets in the past months as unofficial talks aimed at resuming negotiations for a peace agreement with the communist rebels bogged down.

Among the key targets of communist guerrillas are mining areas where owners or operators refuse to pay so-called revolutionary taxes. Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

RESIDENTS of San Pedro, Laguna hoist a sampaguita lei that they paraded around their villages. They officials hoped the lei could be recognized as the world's largest. MARIANNE CHRISTINE QUADRATIN/INQUIRER

Laguna town enters bid for longest lei in the world

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—At least 3,000 people were present Saturday to witness the town's attempt to enter the Guinness World Records (GWR) for the longest lei as well as the largest fresh flower medallion by stitching out a 2.1 kilometer sampaguita lei around four villages here.

The sampaguita lei (with GWR Claim ID 236397), which came from Barangay San Vicente here, was strung by farmhands from 28 villages.

It was the town's attempt to beat the 1,620-kilometer lei record of Hawaii in May 2008.

The sampaguita medallion (with GWR Claim ID 246188) measured six meters in diameter and was prepared for at least two days, said municipal public information officer Linda Bautista.

Students, municipal and village officials, and members of nongovernment organizations held the 10-strand-thick lei around four villages since 6 a.m. until before noon.

This was part of the 18-day Fiesta Sampaguita 2009 that started Feb. 14.

In an earlier press briefing, San Pedro Mayor Calixto Catapia said "the festival specifically seeks to make public servants in San Pedro's capital dedication as the country's premier sampaguita town."

He said he believed San Pedro remained to be home of highly-skilled and artistic makers of sampaguita lei, corsage and bouquet. Marlowe P. Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Illegal STL thrives in 7 Luzon provinces

CALAMAN CITY—OFFICIALS of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) have been monitoring illegal operations of small town lottery (STL) in Cagayan Valley and Cordillera even as the illegal numbers game "burong" is another game has surfaced again.

Yamashita Aquinas, chief lottery operations officer of the PCSO in Isabela, said they are looking into reports that illegal STL is operating in Isabela, Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Batanes, Ifugao and Kalinga.

He said the PCSO has approved only two STL operations in Cagayan Valley.

There are the operations of the Strong Pick Corp. in Roxas town and the Community Gaming and Amusement Network Inc. in Aparri town, both in Isabela.

"There were no accredited outlets in Nueva Vizcaya and Cagayan and even in Ifugao and Kalinga," she said.

She said if new STL outlets in Nueva Vizcaya are approved by the central office, she would deploy PCSO employees to supervise daily operations.

She said a gaming firm, the Grand Majestic Gaming Corp., had been found to be operating the STL in Ifugao town without a permit.

"We have to implement the closure of the Grand Majestic... Now we learned that they have been operating again under a new name," she said.

Supt. Abel Simon, Ifugao police chief, said he has not received any letter from PCSO on illegal STL operations in the town.

"If there are illegal STL outlets, the PCSO must send us a written letter to arrest these operators," he said. Filomeno Mayo, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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INQUIRER Mindanao

Iligan artists perform Mindanao tales

By Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez
Cagayan de Oro City

PERFORMANCES IN over a hundred countries, a host of awards and worldwide recognition mark the stellar career of the Iligan Performing Arts Guild (Ipag).

For over 30 years, the homegrown cultural group, hit from Iligan City has received Philippine arts and theater in more ways than meets the eye. It has established itself as a successful professional performing arts company that has honed a generation of young artists.

But many of its followers believe that what it has truly accomplished is to build a bridge of cultural understanding from Mindanao to the world.

"The fact that we create understanding is in itself a connection to the peace process," says Aurora "Tita" C.F. Fernandez, founder and artistic director of Ipag.

"This may be our biggest contribution to our people — giving Mindanao a certain color of routine. Bringing out the concerns of Mindanao and making our audience understand the differences in a positive way," says Fernandez, who also wrote the book "Making Theatre: The Craft of the Stage."

And how? In its regular world tours, Ipag performances were met with standing ovations and unexpected reactions from an audience who had heard only of Mindanao in news reports about wars and kidnappings.

"The most appreciative audience we've encountered so far are the French. They will tell you anywhere you go, even in the bathroom, just so they could tell you how much they loved your performance," Fernandez recounts.

Training ground

Ipag was born amid a raging Moro separatist war in Marawi City, within the scholarly confines of the Mindanao State University (MSU).

"Our family had to relocate to Marawi because my father was assigned there to help establish the College of Agriculture. It was a sudden change for me. From a very dynamic life in Manila, you find yourself in a place where it was enormous fun to carry guns in public," Fernandez recounts how he began organizing the group.

"It was a complete transformation, from urban to Islamic rural setting ... prayers in the evening, mosques, bonnets. I realized I was so ignorant," he says.

The ARG was a world apart from Islamic Marawi. The school was predominantly Christian, with more than half of its students and faculty non-Muslims. Still, Fernandez, then already teaching English, saw the school as a bridge for Christian-Muslim understanding.

As the war escalated and the political scene more chaotic, Fernandez and his friend, fellow Manilenos Lipaya Fernando Amilbangsa, pushed through with their project of staging productions at MSU.

"We had very simple aims then; like have a swing of repertoire productions, and somehow the elements came into place," Fernandez says.

Soon enough, Ipag became a training ground for young talents looking for performance outlets of their idealism through the performing arts.

According to Fernandez, the early supervisors of Ipag in Marawi were itself good animators of culture.

"We nearly filmed several animations along the road. One time, a few seconds after passing a bridge from Marawi to Iligan, the bridge was burned. Everyone had to evacuate to Iligan, and the whole town burned. So that's why there's the MSU-IIT (Iligan Institute of Technology) as extension school," he says.

But amid this backdrop, Ipag flourished, its productions sought across Mindanao and, eventually, Manila.

Hubert Lester, an Ipag alumnus, recalls the group's first stint in the Big City.

"We were there at the CCP (Cultural) Center of the Philippines) rehearsing with other popular artists, like Herbie Ramirez and Nonoy Zuñiga. I was star-struck, but sometime told me not to be too anxious because we were all artists there," Lester says.

Now the head of the cultural arts departments of the Xavier University and Ateneo de Manila University, Lester considers himself fortunate to have found Ipag.

"My talent and character were honed by Ipag. It had been an excellent training ground for artists like myself," he says.

"It was a complete transformation, from urban to Islamic rural setting..."

All about Mindanao

Fernandez says Ipag presents through its plays and dances not one but three cultures—Christian, Moro or Muslim and indigenous people.

Since its inception, the group has performed 40 to 45 plays created by Fernandez. The "Tales from Mindanao," a fusion of 11 or more dances masterfully woven together in his signature assemblage of theatre performance, has so far been the most popular and widely acclaimed.

"We weaved something wondrous, something we can put together in no time, like an 'instant' performance. That's why we created Tales from Mindanao, which tells of our culture and traditions," Fernandez says.

In a recent performance to commence the national arts month celebration held at the Xavier gymnasium in Cagayan de Oro City, Ipag's "mortar dance" was the most applauded.

"We, many of our audiences even almost appreciate that story which is actually a subtle satire of our character as Filipinos, but you see, different audiences give entirely different interpretations of our plays," Fernandez says.

"Tales from Mindanao" also features intricate performances that highlight the lessons of local traditional dances, like the Maranao rebolo gigid and the Tiruray's rondalay dance.

Another well-applauded dance is one that tells of the legend of the famous coconut tree in Iligan, the Maria Cristina falls.

This is where Ipag's refinement comes into place, says Fernandez. From the colorful and intricately designed traditional costumes to the stories that each performance tells, the audience is compelled to see what Mindanao really is.

"Because you know, to be honest, a lot of other people still think ... people in Mindanao, do they have cable?" Fernandez says in proudly declaring what Ipag has achieved in three decades.

(ING) Lyanor couple Tita and Lani Fernandez talk about their passion for the performing arts.

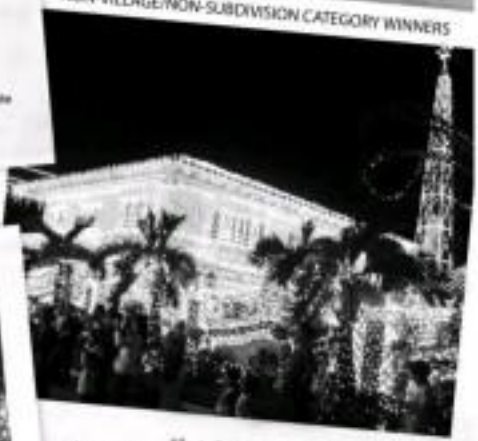
MALIWANAG ANG PASKO

Sa Mga Nagbigay Liwanag at Nagbigay Pag-asa

CHURCH CATEGORY WINNERS

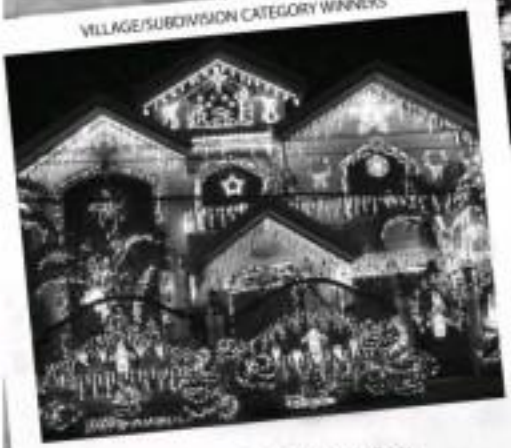
CENTRAL	Saint Joseph Parish, Tondo, Manila Nuestra Señora de Gracia, Makati Archdiocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Mandaluyong
NORTH	Exaltation of the Holy Cross Parish, Malabon San Bartolome Parish, Malabon Bonsecorro Church, Malolos, Bulacan
SOUTH	St. Joseph the Humble Worker Chapel, Dasmariñas, Cavite San Pablo Cathedral, San Pablo, Laguna Sto. Rosario Parish, San Pablo, Laguna

NON-VILLAGE/NON-SUBDIVISION CATEGORY WINNERS



CENTRAL	Alberto P. Almario, Makati Norma O. Lee, Mandaluyong Domingo T. Dalisay, Mandaluyong
NORTH	Jesus L. Adriano, Caloocan Carmen Grove, Malolos Hercules Danilo S. Guevarra, Valenzuela
SOUTH	Imelda M. Garcia, Batangas Leonora Villabona, Las Piñas Francis John Hernandez, Las Piñas

VILLAGE/SUBDIVISION CATEGORY WINNERS



CENTRAL	Albert P. Abrenilla-Ilagan, Calinta Efren D. Calderero, Calinta Judith Claveria S. Garcia, Pasig
NORTH	Marlon C. Lao, Caniogwealth Alejandro T. Lopez, Valenzuela Catalina San Juan, Valenzuela
SOUTH	Merlie Astiguerra, Pasolinique Jessie Alba, San Pedro, Laguna Geremia A. Bautista, Las Piñas

Isang maligayang pagbati at maraming salamat dahil nabigyan ninyo ng maliwanag na kinabukasan ang mga batang inaaruga ng Batang Mumti Foundation, Bantay Bata 163, Laura Vicuna Foundation, Hospicio De San Jose, at Silong Tanglaw Foundation.

MERALCO

Visit www.maliwanagangpasko.com to view the winning entries.

Mobile services bring overseas Filipinos home

The need to be in touch is, undoubtedly, high up in the Filipino's hierarchy of priorities. It is this same necessity that prompts SMART Communications to come up with solutions that keep Filipinos instantly and constantly connected – somehow easing the pain of braving the seas or working in a strange land.

One of them is the SMART Community Solution. An innovative Web-based application accelerating the lives of Filipinos here and overseas, the SMART Community Solution has been recognized as one of the best in the use of mobile for social and economic development during the 2009 GSMA Global Mobile Awards held last week in Barcelona, Spain.

A complete mobile application driven by turn-main components – a Web-based messaging service called INFOBOARD and a Customized Community SIM – it allows for various sets of short messaging service (SMS) facilities that offer tailored content and better community calling rates. The application offers different functions and capabilities in order to fit the specific needs of an organization or community.

Among those who benefit immensely from this application are Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), particularly seafarers, who have to endure the pain of being away from home and family. Others include schools, local government units (LGUs) and various government offices.

Apart from this application, SMART continues to develop and introduce various network that bridge the gap between Filipinos working overseas and the loved ones they left behind. These services include one that enables Filipinos in the US to be seamlessly in touch with relatives in the Philippines using local rates.

"We know how valuable communication is to Filipinos all over the world and we are simply pleased that we are able to offer customized services that address their particular needs and situations," said SMART Head of Wireless Consumer Division Dennis I. Mudo.

He pointed out that the partnership underscores SMART's commitment to using the benefits of mobile technology in a more widely accessible for the country's modern-day heroes.

Seafarers in touch

OFWs – especially seafarers – are deemed a major pillar of the Philippine economy for bringing in the much-needed dollars. They are also a major beneficiary of the SMART Community Solution.

SMART has signed an agreement with the Philippine Transmarine Carriers (PTC), one of the country's largest ship crew management companies, to provide over 20,000 Filipino seafarers with customized wireless communication services to keep them in touch with loved ones.

The customized SMART Pinoy SIM for the seafarers, SMART Buddy SIMs for their families, and the InfoBoard work together to provide PTC the faster, more affordable, and more reliable means to send crucial information to seafarers and their families, as well as collect feedback from them.

PTC can easily customize and manage the contents of the InfoBoard according to their need and preference. Messages may be posted on the InfoBoard, for pick-up by the seafarer or his family through a simple user query. Seafarers and their families who use the customized SMART Pinoy PTC SIM have access to special offers and services SMART has been working closely with PTC in providing seafarers access to SMART's the country's first and only prepaid satellite phone service, as it is connected to their families via ship to sea. PTC has over 20,000 officers and crew deployed to vessels all around the world.

"At PTC, we are building bridges and connecting lives. Through this partnership with SMART and taking advantage of the latest technologies, we hope to enhance the services of PTC and continue to improve the lives of our valued seafarers," said PTC Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Carlos C. Salazar.

One other beneficiary of the connectivity solution is Magsaysay Maritime Corp., a leading human resources organization which provides high quality seafaring personnel to the world-class companies in the maritime, cruise, hotel and healthcare industries.

"The goal of the Magsaysay-SMART partnership is to improve the quality of lives and relationships through better connectivity among the Magsaysay people and the Community SIM is a huge and significant step in fulfilling the goal," said Magsaysay Maritime Corp. Chief Information Officer Norman V. Carandang.

Magsaysay can now communicate with its people anytime and with certainty that important messages will be received. Groups will more dramatically enhance relationships within the Magsaysay community by allowing people to be in touch with each other more often.

The interactive customized menu, which is integrated with the SMS menu, provides the crew immediate and round-the-clock access to crucial information for seafarers and their beneficiaries.

Linkage across the seas

Four Filipinos in the United States now enjoy the advantages that SMART's mobile technology brings. Another innovation by SMART, a new communication device called Plug N' Talk is connecting more Filipinos living in America to the Philippines via an affordable and reliable communication line.

The Plug N' Talk device is SMART's latest game plan for connecting Filipinos to a free VoIP (Internet Phone) device that allows a call to be placed to any number in the Philippines for as low as P6.50, and also allows sending of text at P1.

SMART Head of Sales, Business Development and Investment Services Group Perry Bayani introduced the new product to members of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA) during its 9th National Conference held in Seattle, USA.

The service, which is also credited to resolve calls and text from the Philippines to the United States and vice versa, is also available for free, around NaFFAA members who attended the conference. "The sound quality was so good, I had to ask to have the volume turned down a couple of times", said one who tried calling the Philippines. NaFFAA members could not believe that the device would allow them to send text messages to the Philippines at least once.

Plug N' Talk is one of several products under the SMART Pinoy program that serves OFWs and Filipino migrants. The program presents an array of services that seek to keep Filipinos connected with their family and friends in the Philippines while abroad. Services include IDD, international SMS and MMS, value-added services like international voice mail and voice text to email, call me refunding via SMART Send, and remittance services like SMART Padala.

As additional emphasis to their resolve for home, the leading wireless services provider holds a yearly SMART Pinoy Grand Homecoming where returning OFWs who are somewhere of the moment get the chance to win premium items including a brand-new Isuzu Crosswind XTO. The company also launched in March 2008 the SMART Pinoy Jeck and Fun Fair in Angeles, Pampanga – the first of seven legs – to open dozens of opportunities to relatives of OFWs.

> **"We know how valuable communication is to Filipinos all over the world and we are simply pleased that we are able to offer customized services that address their particular needs and situations."**
>
> – Dennis I. Mudo
> Head, SMART Wireless Consumer Division

All these initiatives, including the globally recognized SMART Community Solution, are SMART's response to an important sector of all Philippine society that has common needs although from distinctive roots. They are also a modest tribute to the generation of resourceful Filipinos who continue to bring hope to a nation's nurturing resistance to the deeds of global strife.

Breaking the sound barrier

SMART

Aplus METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Home for the Angels

This center never says 'No' to unwanted babies

By Erika Sauler

A FEW YEARS AGO, RAFAEL WAS AN ABANdoned baby afflicted with leukemia. Two hospitals had declared him as a hopeless case. After several months of "tender loving care" in a shelter, he's now a healthy boy living with his adoptive family in Spain.

When Angel was admitted, they thought she was simply malnourished. She was thin and unresponsive. After they found out she was pamplegic, she was given medical attention and stimulated by special education teachers. Now, fed through a tube inserted in her stomach, she looks happy and readily smiles at people.

Miracle of life

"The miracle of life happens in this home every day," said Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, founder of Home for the Angels (HFA), the crisis shelter for abandoned babies.

HFA recently marked its 11th anniversary this month, proud of having admitted 260 babies for emergency shelter and residential care. Program Director Socorro Arevalo said they have also aided 4,230 people through counseling.

"We have a hotline number and different people call us, basically, to seek help on issues concerning relationships, pregnancy, abortion and adoption," Arevalo said.

She said sometimes people would walk in and ask "How much for two months?"

"They thought we perform abortions because we only announce in public service programs that they could come to us if they have unwanted pregnancies," Arevalo said.

She said they entertain these inquiries in the shelter's receiving/counseling room where they narrate to "Inamanin" in the mother's mind what she might have considered as a mere mass of blood in her womb.

"Many persons of the time, they continue with their pregnancy," Arevalo said.

HFA was an offshoot of Atienza's commitment to the Pro-Life Movement. The idea of putting up an institution to save unwanted pregnancies, abandoned babies and babies born with diabetes had been brewing in his mind and he had shared this with Jil Shachtel leader Bro. Mike Velarde.

God's creation

Atienza was surprised when Velarde spontaneously in a prayer rally in 1996, "If you have unwanted babies, give them to Vice Mayor Lito Atienza and he will take care of them."

The next day, Feb. 16, a baby was sent to him and they had to set up a shelter in an apartment on Leveriza Extension in Manila. That was the HFA birth.

"When we started, the first thing I asked Lito was, 'Do we have the money?' Because we wouldn't be renting a place, hiring staff and providing for the babies. He only said, 'No,'" Arevalo said.

Atienza explained, "Since we are taking good care of God's creation, the grace of life will take care of us."

And indeed, Arevalo said, "If this is what God wants us to do, there's divine providence. He will always provide. The love for the children should be given because God can never say no to children. Their needs are provided for, like when they say 'Put on' every child a load of bread."

From the old apartment, HFA has moved to a two-story duplex on the corner of Canal and Francisco Streets in 2000.

Striking case

Arevalo said Rafael's case was what really struck them.

"Doctors from two hospitals had said there's nothing they can do. But we believe in miracles," she said. "I think that's one of our specialties. We never say no to babies. We never think of the cost or that we can't save them. We think, God, if this is what You want, then Yes."

"So we brought him home. My office was turned into an isolation room because his condition should be sterile. We just gave him tender loving care. Six volunteers were hired just to cuddle and love him," she said.

"There are ramifications, his appearance was improving," she went on. "And because we regularly update their health documents, he underwent another bone marrow exam. The leukemia was gone."

"If he were left where he came from, he might have died already," she said.

Crisis intervention

Arevalo also shared the story of a baby whom they rescued from being thrown along Roxas Boulevard by his own father. "He's now a taekwondo champion and plays the keyboard in a band," she said.

The HFA is a crisis intervention home that seeks to help babies in the important period of saving their lives. When the babies have improved, they link up with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and nongovernment organizations to set up the babies for adoption or foster care.

"When they're growing up, they need to be out of here. If they're still infants, it's okay. But once they need to socialize, they need a family," Arevalo said.

"From infancy to 2 years of age is a critical period where they only understand love and attention. So we provide them that. We even feed them on schedule even before they cry for it so that they don't feel deprived," Arevalo said.

Some may be pamplegic, blatantly deaf, physically deformed or simply frail by babies. But one would notice one thing, they are all happy babies. These angels have found a home.

LOVE AND AMMENT Secretary Lito Atienza, with wife Berry and HFA director Socorro Arevalo (right) enjoy time with the center's wards. LOVE DAU/INQUIRER

"THE GOVERNMENT SHOULDN'T INSIST in asking the US to take custody of Daniel Smith. We should instead take it easier for our embassies around the world to take custody of OFWs facing criminal suits."
RAY GONEBOL, February 2000

GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world to secure a better life for th

Filipina 'significant other' for Filipinas in Taiwan

By Reuben Lim
Contributor

CANTEENS ARE known for their value. In Taiwan, a Cantonese has done the province proud by standing up for the rights of Filipinas married to citizens of that island nation.

What's more, Eleanor "Nene" B. Hoban made it her life's work to help her compatriots through an organization she founded some 10 years ago, the Filipina Married to Taiwanese Association (FMTA). She is also the publisher of The Sigaseo, a monthly newspaper for Filipinas in Taiwan. Among others, these have earned her recognition last year as one of the Philippines' Outstanding awardees for significant contributions to overseas Filipino communities.

While she has been an activist for the rights of OFWs and Filipino spouses of Taiwanese, Nene has maintained a harmonious relationship with the Taiwanese in general, and more especially with her loving Taiwanese husband with whom she has a daughter.

She is a mainstay in Filipino affairs in Taiwan and is one of the most active partners of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office in taking care of expat Filipinos.

All about respect

"It is all about respect," says this former English teacher born in Cavite City in 1964. "Filipinos have to respect themselves and show that they are worthy of respect, no matter where they are."

Nene knows this firsthand because she herself was among the first Filipinas to work in Taiwan, here to almost 90,000 Filipinas working in factory workers, domestics, construction workers, entertainers, and professionals. Many Taiwanese men have also chosen Filipinas as brides through arranged marriages. An estimated 7,000 Filipinas now live there with their Taiwanese husbands.

Nene's own marriage is a far warrior. 10 years her senior developed strong similar lines. A business administration degree holder from the Philippine Women's University, she detailed in city bus lines in Taiwan after working in Manila companies. Arriving on a tourist visa, Nene wangled a job at the front desk of Taipei's then-leading hotel, the Lai Lai Sheraton, but though she did well enough at the hotel to request her stay be extended, say, the Sheraton already had five other foreign workers so Nene transferred to a travel agency where she wrote promotional material.

Loving a Taiwanese

"My boss found me very useful for his business, so he really tried all means to get me to stay in Taiwan. The only means he found was for me to get married to a Taiwanese, so he introduced me to his friend and we got married for that purpose—to get a better visa for me to stay in Taiwan," she says.

But Nene's story does not end there.

"After marriage, we dated, we became closer to each other and since I found him to be a very gentle, thoughtful, loving and considerate man, I agreed to live with him. That was how he became my husband. Now we have one daughter who is studying at the university," she says.

After marriage, Nene set about with industry, determined to make her marriage work by balancing career and family obligations.

"Though I was working then in a travel agency at daytime and teaching English at night, I managed to take care of the household, cooking, food every day and of course the family. I was very busy but that was all right with me. I only had to learn how to arrange and budget my time so as I could fulfill all my responsibilities as my family, first and foremost. But my husband's acceptance of the wife depends on how the wife is doing," she says.

Collective voice

Armed with her own positive experiences, Nene decided to set up the FMTA to give Filipinas a collective voice and for the spouses to interact with and support each other in their new lives in a foreign land.

"I was one of the founders and became president for over five years," she says. "The FMTA is also well recognized by the Taiwan government and has always been consulted whenever they have some activities that are meant for foreign workers, foreign spouses and their children. We have had some lectures on foreign spouses and invited resource speakers to give us insights on different issues as well as fun. We have supported different approaches the Taiwan government could take for our sector. We have conducted English classes for the children of our members, and have sent needy children to school. Our children now joining regular activities like in the church."

Hotline for abused spouses

Because many Taiwanese men have had to look to foreign brides for their wives, the Taiwan government has put up measures to prevent abusive marriages.

None knows them by heart.

"The government provides a hotline (1133) that is open 24 hours (in 5 languages—English, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Cambodian, Thai) to answer calls for help.

They also have a toll free line (0800-088-885) for Foreign Spouses Protection Counseling, also open for 24 hours. They are always ready to help the callers and to collect evidence to help them with their cases. They also have counseling hotlines to five languages.

Lawsuits in every district around the country are available to help victims of domestic violence, to pay the medical check-up and help provide temporary shelter. If the victim is in live alone, she will be educated on how to live a new life and to find a new job for herself."

English barrier

"The foreign spouse who becomes victims of maltreatment are authorized to apply with the courts for a restraining order. That will restrain the actions of the violent husbands and guarantee the safety of the victims. They can also apply for the custody of the children and require the husbands to secure their personal records. If there is any court case, the victims are allowed to extend their stay to all the case is finished."

The government has also published some books, magazines, and pamphlets for the foreign wives so that they would know what to do in case any sort of problem occurs. "In fact, the ministry had contracted us to publish some issues on social abuse and domestic violence in our newspaper. They are all in Chinese and we had to translate everything in Tagalog and English," she says.

Services for OFWs

The language barrier is one of the most difficult hurdles for Filipinas to overcome, according to Nene, as is the need for them to be gainfully employed if their families cannot live on just one income. But by and large, she says, the Filipino members have had successful marriages because Filipinas are traditionally very caring and family-oriented, traits that Taiwanese men appreciate.

To date, with Nene as mainstay-in-law, welfare cases involving Filipinas married to Taiwanese are at a zero-level rate, based on the assistances-in-nationals report of the Commission on Overseas Filipinos.

But marriage to foreign nationals and living abroad is not a bed of roses, Nene is quick to assert.

"That is why the FMTA is there as a support group for all of us who have made a new life in Taiwan," she says.

Nene is also quite active in ensuring the welfare of OFWs in Taiwan to the extent that sometimes her own home is used as a half-way shelter for distressed OFWs. She is also active and is calls during unjustly leave from her compatriots who seek her advice and help in dealing with employers and personal problems, or to give job referrals.

She publishes and edits her monthly newspaper distributed free to Filipinas, financed by advertisements from Philippine and Taiwan firms that service the OFWs' needs.

The Sigaseo provides OFWs with news from the Philippines and information on new developments and government policies that affect them. It also features advice columns and self-help articles, and snippets and photos of the goings-on in the Filipino community in Taiwan, aside from the obligatory Filipino showbiz chismis.

Relevant publication

"The content is now my full-time job, and it is really no joke to have a monthly publication that is relevant and meaningful to your readers. Aside from contributions, we also do our own staff research on the Internet to get articles that would be of interest to readers. In fact, circulation is growing and so is the number of our advertisers that help defray the cost of publication and printing," she says.

Nene is preparing for the possibility of her eventual retirement with her husband to a home in Cavite.

THREE'S COMPANY. Nene Ho (center) with one of her pupil's (classmates Lee Phoebus (left) and Mace director Isabel Gutierrez).

OFW advisor and newspaper publisher Nene Ho: "Filipinos have to respect themselves and show they are worthy of it."

Is there reason for a high five?

MAGSAYSAY DUBOIS, a Filipino veteran, served 20 American years expecting to a prison camp during World War II. He was able to immigrate to the US in 1982 and became a naturalized US citizen. Beginning in 1995, he looked forward to having the Equity Bill passed in Congress to attain his long ambition. After ninety years of waiting in the US, he passed away in 2005.

More and more aging veterans die each week and the greatest generation is slowly diminishing in number.

Sixty-three years after the passage of the 1946 Rescission Act declassifying the services of Filipino World War II veterans, the US Congress has passed a bill recognizing our Filipino veterans and providing a lump sum grant of $15K million.

Spending authorization

In an economic crisis, awarding $15K million appropriation for the Filipino World War II veterans is definitely controversial after many years of struggle for recognition. The Filipino veterans and their supporters emerged victorious last week when both the US House and the Senate approved HR 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, as the economic stimulus bill.

This provision is not new as it was previously included in the following bill signed by President George Bush in September 2008. The $15M million was appropriated last year but there was no authorization for spending. Through the office of Senator Daniel Inouye, the Senate drafted the provision (both in declaration and included it in this year's stimulus bill.

Last year's Congress first introduced this lump sum of $15M million for veterans through the leadership of Rep. Bob Filner. Called the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund (FEF 0607), the bill was approved after the previous one Filipino Veterans was withdrawn from the Veterans benefit enhancement bill (SB 1315) during Senate deliberation. The latter bill would have contained many benefits and a higher budget allocation as it attempted to recognize Filipino veterans residing in the US as having the same rights and benefits as their US counterparts.

The $15M million budget for the Filipino WWII veterans did not come as a silver platter. They brought about by years of campaigning, hard work and the collective effort of advocates who believed in the cause of the Filipino World War II veterans.

Qualified victory

Senators Daniel Inouye, and Daniel Akaka, Rep. Mike Honda, Rep. Bob Filner and Speaker Nancy Pelosi have been a few of the strong advocates for the Filipino WWII veterans cause. They were instrumental in having this $15M million included in the stimulus bill.

The classification of the services of the Filipino WWII veterans that was changed in the 1946 Rescission Act as not an act for purposes of US veterans benefit was amended after 63 years. This time, our Filipino WWII veterans services are fully recognized as active military service for purposes of the benefits but only to "the extent provided by law." This is the qualification that makes a difference if our Filipino veterans are to be fully recognized. Their full recognition is equal to the extent of $15M million but limited to those who are harmony to live to this day and still able to enjoy the benefits of this bill.

This bill addresses certain veterans' needs but does not resolve the issue of veterans' equity for those who stayed on benefit, due to long stretches. However, the bill contains provisions that are troubling.

One is the "release" provision. It prohibits further claims from the US government upon receipt of the receipt of this lump sum money. While we cannot validly state that this is the provision that they long deserve, the lump sum is like a settlement claim or damages for the homestead estate. That is not the concept behind equity. It is about correcting the injustice and treating our veterans equally with justice and fairness for services they have rendered in the same way as those of their US veteran counterparts.

Pleading for widows

The $15M million budget is fully authorized to be disbursed by the secretary of Veterans Affairs. Filipino veterans who are US citizens will receive $15,000 and non-US citizen veterans residing in the Philippines will receive $9,000. There is a time frame of one year to apply for the compensation benefits, and surviving spouses will benefit only if their veteran spouses were able to apply within the one-year period.

The secretary of Veterans Administration must promptly oversee the provision of this veteran pension benefit.

After President Obama signed the bill on Feb. 17, 2009, many Filipino veterans advocate groups celebrated the victory. But is there really a reason for a high five when this lump sum legislation gives no benefit whatsoever to Filipino veterans who fought and begin recognition but did not outlive the passage of this bill? Neither does this lump sum provide any benefit to widows or the surviving family members of these Filipino veterans. Nor will there be any benefits for veterans who are now living but may not survive the next few weeks (or months) while the US$15 is still to come out with regulations on how to apply for this lump sum.

We share this disbursement victory with reservation.

IMFO
Conrales
Santos
Francisco

Those in need of the benefits of the Veterans Equity Center, a Sun Watson-based non-profit organization, can also may be reached at 925-600-7177 or at law@sunwatson.com.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quirico

Stanford's banks, firms in Antigua seized

FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA/ST.JOHN'S, Antigua—Regulators seized Texas billionaire Allen Stanford's banks and companies in Antigua and Barbuda, the Caribbean state at the center of fraud charges against him, as the financier surrendered his passport to US authorities.

Antigua's government, which in 2006 gave Stanford a knighthood, said the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank announced the takeovers on Friday after a raid by dispatched that week to withdraw their funds from Stanford banking affiliates.

Stanford, 58, was charged by the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on Tuesday with fraudulently selling $8 billion in certificates of deposit with improbably high interest rates from his Stanford International Bank Ltd (SIB), headquartered in Antigua.

SEC spokesperson Kevin Callahan said that Stanford and his associates—Laura Pendergast-Hoyle, SIB's chief financial officer, and Leroy Douglas—had surrendered their passports in keeping with a judge's order.

On Thursday, the FBI tracked Stanford down in Fredericksburg, about 100 miles southwest of Washington, to serve him with court papers, but a day later Stanford was nowhere to be seen, reports Reuters Virginia team.

The FBI, Internal Revenue Service, SEC and banking regulators have been investigating allegations of fraud and other possible illegal activity by Stanford's companies for at least two years, the Washington Post reported in two-day editions, citing people familiar with the matter.

The FBI was exploring bringing other charges against him, and the SEC was continuing its investigation, it said.

Meanwhile, the court-appointed receiver overseeing the assets of Stanford's companies—Dallas lawyer Ralph Janvey—said in a statement the customer accounts were frozen until legal claims could be sorted out.

Also, a federal judge presiding over the Stanford case, US District Judge Reed O'Connor, was recused because a relative has "substantial" Stanford holdings, according to a court filing.

The Stanford scandal, based on the heels of allegations that Wall Street veteran Bernard Madoff carried out a $50 billion fraud, has upended investments of investors and triggered investigations in Latin America, Europe and the United States.

Perry said on Friday that it had started an investigation to see if the local unit of Stanford Group had engaged in money laundering.

Acting at the SEC's request, FBI agents served Stanford event orders and other documents on Thursday in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Stanford is not under arrest and his private whereabouts remained unclear on Friday.

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank announced the takeover of Stanford-controlled Bank of Antigua after what it called "an unusual and substantial withdrawal of funds ... which has the potential to create severe liquidity problems for the Bank."

The central bank said publicity surrounding the Stanford case was threatening the interests of depositors and creditors. Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

US moves to dispel bank nationalization rumors

WASHINGTON—President Barack Obama's administration moved to quash rumors that troubled US banks will be nationalized as the chorus of financial institutions took another beating on the market. "The administration continues to strongly believe that a privately held banking system is the soundest way to go," White House spokesperson Robert Gibbs told reporters on Friday amid speculations that Bank of America and Citigroup are among banks facing imminent nationalization. The US Treasury Department also rejected the market speculation that said interest charge will rise next year or Friday. AFP

US expanding missile strikes inside Pakistan

WASHINGTON—Over the past week, the Obama administration has expanded the covert war led by the CIA inside Pakistan, launching attacks against a militant network seeking to topple the Pakistani government. The two missile strikes on homeing camps are by Baitullah Mehsud reportedly a headstrong of the Taliban campaign inside Pakistan, which has been largely carried out by unmanned drone aircraft. Under President George W. Bush, the United States frequently launched Predator drone attacks on the Taliban and worked in cross-border attacks into Afghanistan, but had stopped short of calls aimed at Mehsud and his followers, who have objectives of a direct nature attacks on American troops.

AFP

Author pardoned for insulting Thai king

NICOLAIDES AFP/FILE

BANGKOK—Australian author who was jailed in Thailand for defaming the country's monarchy is convicted but will not jail terms, court-ordered house arrest Saturday after he was granted a royal pardon. Harry Nicolaides, 47, an Bangkok's lese-majesty code has a maximum prison sentence of 15 years in prison for insulting the king and queen, prison 4 a self-published 2003 book "Innocent Exile." The court said a passage about the books to Israel praise caused "defamation" to the royal family and suggested an "abuse of monarchy."

AFP

Poll: 71 percent want Japan PM Aso to resign

TOKYO—Embattled Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso faced a new and popular to resign on Saturday as a poll conducted by the Asahi newspaper showed more than 70 percent of respondents want him to quit and a senior politician within the ruling party questioned his ability to lead, dearly popularity has rapidly eroded recently fed by a deepening economic recession, a series of public catastrophes and suspicions of weak leadership.

AFP

Iran hangs man sentenced to death by stoning

TEHRAN—An Iranian man who was sentenced to death by stoning after he was found guilty of having illicit relations with a teenage girl has been hanged, a newspaper reported on Saturday. Abdullah Fereidoni, a 50-year-old metalworker, was hanged on Thursday in a prison in the northern town of Sari, the Etemad-Melli newspaper said. Under Iran's Islamic law, adultery is still punishable by stoning, which involves the public burying of women at a publicly named convict. A man is buried up to his waist and a woman up to her shoulders. Convicts are injured if they can free their bodies. Five Iranians have reportedly been stoned to death in the past few years, including two men in Mashhad in December, despite a 2002 directive by judiciary chief Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi imposing a moratorium on such executions. Capital offenses in Iran include murder, rape, armed robbery, drug trafficking and adultery.

AFP

Suicide attack kills 30 at funeral in Pakistan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan—A suicide bomber blew himself up at a funeral for a slain Taliban leader on Friday in northwestern Pakistan, killing 30 people and wounding more than 60, police and military officials said. Three officials people were killed in security battles ongoing quelled by the attack.

No one claimed responsibility, but the blast bore the hallmarks of brutal extremists blamed for a string of other bloody strikes against Pakistan's Shiite minority in recent months.

The spike in sectarian violence is adding to the sense of crisis in the nuclear-armed country as it grapples with rising attacks by al-Qaida and Taliban militants based in tribal lands close to the Afghan border.

Hikmatullah said the suicide bomber barged into a 1,000-strong crowd mourning Nazeer's graveyard before found Khan and then detonated his explosives. The crowd was mourning Nazir Tarnzai, a Shiite leader who was gunned down in the city the day before.

The blast left bodies, shoes and torn clothing littering the bloodstained street. Some of the dead and wounded were taken to hospitals in wooden handcarts because there were not enough ambulances.

Soon after, gunfire broke out and major Shiites said he police officers nothing to the scene, police official Ishtiaq Marwat said, they public has been robbed by thieves.

At least 30 people were killed in the blast, while three more were shot dead in the riots, said Dr. Ismail Mehsud, who was treating some of the wounded. At wounded at the city's main hospital. By nightfall, troops patrolling the streets had enforced order, and police officials blamed Shiah.

Extremists from the majority Sunni community regard Shiites as heretical, and the two groups have long engaged in tit-for-tat killings in Pakistan. Attacks have risen in recent years along with the rise in violence by al-Qaeda and the Taliban, which are also Sunni groups.

Analysts say those militants are targeting the sectarian violence and likely drawing in supporting many of it.

Nevin Hussain, a Shiite leader in Dera Ismail Khan, said extremists are trying to start a wider sectarian conflict in the region by stoking violence between the two main sects.

"This attack is yet another attempt to leave us to leave Dera Ismail Khan, but we will face the situation and will stay here," Hussain said.

Many of the sectarian attacks have been in or close to the northwest, where Sunni militant groups have seized control of swaths of territory despite a series of military offensives.

On Monday, Pakistan announced it would agree to the imposition of Islamic law in the restive Swat valley in the northwest of the country as part of an agreement aimed at restoring peace after an 18-month military campaign. The pact was spearheaded by hardline cleric Sufi Mohammad who is rejoining with the Taliban to the government to give up the fight.

A spokesperson for Mohammad said talks with militant leader Maulana Fazlullah on Friday had gone well.

"We will soon give good news to the people," spokesperson Ameer Izzat Khan said.

The government has rejected criticism that the pact would create a Taliban sanctuary less than 160 kilometers from the capital, Islamabad, insisting it is committed to combating terrorism and extremism. AP

Madoff never made purported investments

NEW YORK—THE CLIENTS WHO TRUST Bernard L. Madoff still do not know exactly what he did with their money. But they know what he did not do with it. He did not buy any of those blue-chip stocks and Treasury bills listed on their account statements every the last 13 years.

The once-reputed trustee who is reeling down Madoff's business said on Friday that his team had searched records going back almost to 1993 and found no evidence that any securities were bought for investors during that time.

That pattern probably stretches back even further, according to the trustee, Irving Picard. But his team, operating as a client, knew "under the watchful eyes of the FBI," has not yet been able to dig back earlier in the Madoff archives, he said.

His report, delivered at an emotional public meeting of creditors on Friday, elucidate the theory that Madoff was an investment man driven mad by the relentless modest strain of record years. And it raises the question of how all those fake statements and trade confirmations were generated in the absence of any genuine trading.

Those details about the case were told not to an intent and diverse audience that filled a courtroom auditorium in Lower Manhattan. Investors and Bernard Madoff were crowded next to lawyers with suit and expensive ties. Customers detailed hardships they or friends members were suffering because of the Madoff collapse, and many expressed anger at regulators who had not stopped Madoff and lawmakers who they say have failed to respond to the financial crisis that's much of his fraud.

Investigators with the US attorney's office in Manhattan and the Securities and Exchange Commission are trying to piece together what Madoff did in the suite where he managed clients' money, unravel flaws below the legitimate stock-trading business that won the public trust of Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities.

Their investigation has made the trustee's task more difficult. The lavish homes that secure Madoff's $13 million bail current be touched by the trustee until the criminal case is resolved.

Claims require have come from 1,100 customers, claiming losses that Picard so called is being "about $1 billion."

By law, customers can claim only the difference between the total amount they deposited over the years and the total amount they took out. AFP

MADOFF AP

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WHAT'S INSIDE
- LeBron, Cavs torch Bucks; Lakers score (A23)
- Muay thai chief shot dead inside gym (A23)

Sunday SPORTS
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

PAL SENIORS

C'lubang now up

Big 3rd round sets stage for thrilling finale

By Dennis A. Gonzales
Sports Features Editor

LOTS OF HARDWARE Manny Pacquiao, the acknowledged pound-for-pound champion of the world, is flanked by Sen. Manny Villar (left) and Smart-PLDT top honcho Manny V. Pangilinan during the Sen Miguel-PSA Awards Night Friday night at the Allegro Lounge of the Manila Pavilion. See related stories on A32. (EDDIE MESA)

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SAVE Hurwanidez speeds on a swing during his charge for Cavitenos

PSA AWARDS

Pacquiao calls it a triumph of faith

BOXING superstar Manny Pacquiao receives his trophies from Philippine sports editor and PSA vice president Tutóy Mercadero (left) and PSA president Aldrin Cardenas of the Daily Tribune (right) during the PSA awards night Friday. Pacquiao was named Athlete of the Year and was enshrined in the PSA's Hall of Fame.

By Jasmine W. Payo

MANNY PACQUIAO DOESN'T MIND IF SOMEBODY ELSE GETS THE credit for his strength and seemingly ring infallibility.

Truth, after all, has gotten him this far, and he believes it is his faith that will take him even further.

On a night when he was named best of all sports heroes, the Filipino ring icon humbly sought everybody's prayers as he matches two-yes another huge challenge awaits the superchamp.

"Siguro grapplers' eyes ako. (I hope you'll pray for me) against Ricky Hatton," said the boxing billionaire, who will fight the British "Hitman" on May 2 in Las Vegas.

It's a plan Pacquiao has always made in his prize fights even with the boxing community acknowledging him as the two-pound-for-pound fighter in the world.

Besides, after all, last-minute hits like this tend to believe it is his faith that will take him even further.

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It's a plan Pacquiao has always made in his prize fights even with the boxing community acknowledging him as the two-pound-for-pound fighter in the world.

Pacquiao, the only Filipino and Asian boxer to bag world titles in four different weight classes, received the Athlete of the Year and Hall of Fame awards in the San Miguel Corporation-Philippine Sportswriters Association Annual Awards Night Friday night.

"Lagi ako nagpapasalamat sa mga fans ko at sa buong mga sportswriters para sa mabuting suhog na ibinigay niyo sa akin (I'm always thankful to the fans and sportswriters for all the support you've given me)," said Pacquiao.

Along with Pacquiao, boxing champion Nonito Donaire Jr., media Olympian Willy Wang, professional racer Kelly Williams and champion jockey Jonathan Hernandez received major awards together with golden Jennifer Reander, Dorothy Delasin, Angelo Que, Stella Ardina, pool idol Jeresa Orcollo and race horses Go Jetmg and Bianca.

Stanley singer Norberto Torres and golfer Ali Ramon also received the Tony Siddayao award for excellence in youth sports, while Sen. Manny Villar accepted the PSA President's Award for his contributions to the development and promotion of billiards.

"Sports is now the number one source of pride of the Filipino people," Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco said.

Joining Cojuangco in honoring the country's top athletes were POC chair Nery Jegging, Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny V. Pangilinan, Pagcor's Mon Gochuico and PSA president Aldrin Cardenas.

The Willie Ordoñez Award of the Philippines received the Outstanding Basketball Coach of the Year award.

Angging took the cue and added P500,000 to the cause, before Pacquiao capped the one-night windfall with another cool million.

"It's my way of giving back to the Filipino sportsmen who helped me; they've become a great part of my success in boxing," Pacquiao said in Filipino after receiving the PSA Athlete of the Year and Hall of Fame awards, the top honors in the annual ceremony hosted by the 60-year-old media organization.

"My only appreciation the kindness of [one] by these fine gentlemen to the entire PSA," said Aldrin Cardenas, president of the fraternity composed of editors and reporters of the country's top broadcasters and tabloids.

Cardenas said Angging has wants the foundation to help sports journalists in need and will be managed by an independent body made up of PSA members and officials to be named by the telecommunications tycoon.

"The PSA will come up with guidelines after consultations with everyone involved to make sure the foundation will function as it should," Cardenas explained.

AIDING basketball star Norberto Torres (left) and golfer Ali Ramon show their Tony Siddayao trophies, named after the late great sportswriter and awarded to excellency young athletes. Felicisimo Francisco (inset) receives an award in behalf of the Philippine Army of Santo Tomas University program. LEFT: Boy won the two 10 overall championships in the UAAP.

Sports' biggest names ante up for journalists' foundation

By Jasmine W. Payo

FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, THE PACE BE-hind their byline took the spotlight.

Citing the sportswriters' role in the activist causes of Philippine sports, three of the country's top sports figures whipped up a seed money worth P2.5 million for the establishment of a media foundation.

Telecommunications tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan and Filipino-ring icon Manny Pacquiao donated P1 million each and Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angging also threw in half a million for the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) in a surprise announcement during the San Miguel Corporation-PSA Awards Night at the Hyatt Lounge of the Manila Pavilion late Friday night.

"We've helped in the athletes a great deal already, but I'm not sure if we've helped the writers who cover sports; so what I would like you to do is set up a foundation for the benefit of sportswriters," Pangilinan, the patron of Philippine boxing and president of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas, said in his speech.

Pangilinan, the top honcho of Philippine Long Distance Company and Smart Communications, made the initial pledge moments before receiving the Sport to Heroes of the Year award.

Angging, who is also chairman of the Philippine Olympic Committee, before Pacquiao capped the one-night windfall with another cool million.

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Coo: Junior coaches' contracts expired

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE BOWLING CONGRESS SECRETary general Bong Coo yesterday clarified that it was not the PBC which hired the ousted coaches of the junior team and, in the same manner, wasn't in the position to renew their contract.

Philippine Junior Bowlers Association coaches Jonathan Bay and Angelo Constantino were removed from the payroll of the Philippine Sports Commission after their contracts expired last Dec. 31, spanning nearly three years of some 40 young players.

Coo said that the PBA deals directly with the PSC and does not go through the PBC.

She said the PBC is being made to appear responsible for the termination of the coaches' contract that many are as a result of the ongoing power struggle inside the PBC.

The bowling great did admit that the PBC asked the PSC to cut financial assistance to the PBA until the latter liquidates its financial assistance from the sports agency.

But SP team stalwarts Bay and Constantino have been already accredited for the P340,000 cash advances the team received from the PSC when their team competed in the World Youths in Orlando, Florida, last year.

Bay, Asian Games silver winner and medalist Southeast Asian Games champion, said it was actually the job of the PBA administrative officers to make the accounting but they took it upon themselves to disturb the liquidation.

Constantino had also said that PBA reps abroad were mostly funded by private sponsors, including association chief Ian Sevilla.

"We are doing a great job, but I think it's more of politics," Constantino said.

Constantino and Bay lead a four-man coaching staff that coaches bowlers aged 21 and under at the E Lanao in Ortigas every weekend under the helm of the PBA.

SMALL BEGINNINGS Young bowlers go at each other during last year's Mile Super Kiddie Kids. The program kicks off its ninth year at SM Manhilina today. Organized by the Association for the Advancement of Bowlers (AAB), the clinic is open to bowlers ages 12 and up competing for both bumper and kids events.

SPORTSWATCH

St. Scholastica No. 8

ST. SCHOLASTICA'S COLLEGE WILL GO for an unprecedented eighth straight career championship championship at the close of the 2009 Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association (WNCAA) season today at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum. St. Scholastica, which beat Mirriam College and Emilio Aguinaldo College in last year's finals, is eyeing a second season championship after topping rivalries behind Adele from rivalries. The champion will get P150,000, the runner-up P75,000 and the third place P15,000. Mainstay Network will air a three-part special of the cheerleading contest and other WNCAA features on Feb. 21 to Mar. 1. All programs start at 7 p.m.

Big Makati derby up

CONGRATULATING ITS TIME Makati Coliseum honors as well as the "110 Kilometer Boulevard 6-mile derby." Promoter Lito Orbiluso, one of the founders of MT-J Sports and Amusement Corp., will host the blockbuster event which is also of the Makati Coliseum's biggest attractions every year. Participants must submit their entries today, Sunday, Feb. 22, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. The event serves as a follow-up to the "Gold Quest Olympia 5-mile derby" last week, won by Yeng Arbis, Boy Mayle, Won Arbis and Pat Estrellado. For details, phone call 8902645 and 8902647.

La Salle ends Santo Tomas UAAP tennis reign

LA SALLE ENDED UNIVERSITY OF Santo Tomas' two-year reign in the UNAP men's tennis with a sweep of the best-of-three finals recently at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

National athlete Patrick Adre Theron and Irish De Guzman shared the Most Valuable Player award after playing key roles in the series capped by a 6-1 victory in Game 2.

De Guzman blasted Miguel Narvaez for a 6-8, 6-3 triumph in the first singles match, while Theron teamed up with Andrick De Castro to pull off another decisive win, 8-0, 6-1, against Gerald Pitali and Bienna Flores in the doubles match.

Michael Baeza downed Kranz Barrapino, 6-1, 7-5, to seal the victory for the Archers as doubles partners Wilbur Orillano and Alexander Diego secured the lone win for the Tigers.

The Archers handed the Tigers' bid for the outright championship by retaining their chairdown on the final day of the elimination round.

And the Archers sustained their dominance over the Tigers in the championship round to bag their first tennis crown since 2006.

Nikki Manalo bagged her second straight MVP crown with UST, which was the women's tennis champ's ninth overall last week.

The Tigresses merge the elimination round to clinch their fourth straight crown.

Ateneo's Jillian Lagman and and La Salle's Trudy Amoranto were the Rookie of the Year honors. Jasmine W. Payo

Hi-Fi gains Regatta lead

MILAN—NEW ZEALAND'S HI-FI, IMPproved by Neil Pryde, regained top form when it rolled the point-to-point 10-mile coastal mile Semi Race 4 to gain a share of the lead for the overall crown yesterday in the six-race series of the 17th President's Cup Regatta in Sorsogon bay.

Patrick Wong's 30ft Dont Hongkong initially took the lead at the start but Hi-Fi quickly gained ground to retrieve the lead and win the IRC Racing Class of the event.

Hi-Fi wrapped up the point-to-point race in four hours, seven minutes and 52 seconds to rope back RP Ian Bandoza of Bar Cadiveros, which came in nearly four minutes later with a time of 4:11:21.

John Crossmail by Ernesto Echuca, which sailed the Lemon Race 3, checked in third with 4:12:09.

Following the win, Hi-Fi gained a share of the lead with Kandoza after the drop-one race rule came into effect.

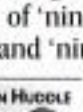
But the win here remains unpredictable as the last two races could turn the races even more exciting. That's because defending champion Subic Centennial can still snatch the overall plum if it wins the last two races of the event.

Skipper George Hackett and his Team Subic/Lemon Pacific Project sailors are with their third race winning streak in the IRC 1-Racing class with a time of 4:11:50.

PHILIPPINE Ian Bandoza drops in a chart of the lead with New Zealand's Hi-Fi after the IRC Racing Class event.

Intriguing list of 'ninongs' and 'ninangs'

IN HUDDLE



Beth Cabs

A VETERAN colleague was given an interesting writing assignment recently by his editor.

"Try to analyze this," the journalist editor of the broadsheet said as he handed the scribe a long list of 40 names, 21 of them gentlemen and the remaining 19 ladies.

They were Manny and Jinkee Pacquiao's handpicked ninongs and ninangs for yesterday's daughter Queen Elizabeth or "Quezelle," who is scheduled to be christened in General Santos City today.

The rumor is a mix of politicians, military officials, businessmen, movie and television personalities, among them MTV-UHF television and radio host Bernie Bustillos, who was said to have gone against Pacman's campaign bid to a controversial seat in the last election.

"The list is intriguing, to say the least," the veteran scribe told his editor. "Obviously, Manny wants to make peace with people he has been in conflict with, or in the case of Bustillos."

"It is also obvious that he's headed for another shot at politics, what with all those senators, congressmen and military officials in the list. There might be some truth to the report that he is running for a congressional seat in the second district of Quezon City."

Manny has expressed his desire to become a public servant "to alleviate the plight of the poor."

If you want to do your own analysis, here is the complete list of Quezelle's ninongs and ninangs who are expected to be in General Santos today to attend the rites at baptism:

Vice President Noli de Castro, Gen. Alexander Yano, Lt. Gen. Victor Ibrado, Sen. Manny Villar, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, Sen. Francis Escudero, Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr., Sen. Miguel Zubiri, Sen. Gregorio Honasan, Lolo "Chavit" Singson, Pagcor chair Sylvester Gonzalez, Rep. Monico Puentevella, Gov. Miguel Dominguez, Atty. Manny Nicdao, Atty. Romeo Capulong, Atty. Rommel Agas, ABS Tomas Pidgal II, Brig. General Mena, Brig. Orlando Salvacion Jr. former mayor Alfonso Sergson, Eseller Pineda, Bro. "Walter" Sabol, Alexander Santos, Paolo Evaristo, Charlie Ang, Phillip Salvador, Dr. Jose Morena Jr., Rodolfo Benitez, Antonio Albano, Johnny Bonoan, Jason Strong, Orville Rogas, Sen. Loren Legarda, Wilma Galvante, Korina Sanchez, Rodjie Magno, Arnolfo Geron, Robina Gokongwei-Pe, Dr. Vicky Belo, Bing Alonso, Mary Pascua, Regina Bagsic, Lilia Pineda, Gilbo Soriano, Margie Rilo, Romualdo Rasos, Tricha Stevens and Jeanne Romero.

If "The Hush and the Furious" press conference held at the Rosen Salon room of the Manila Hotel last Friday, the guests could not help but notice the petite, sassy good-looking lady in black who was with world boxing champ Nonito Donaire.

She was introduced as Rachel Bonifacio, Nonito's wife.

People could not resist comparing Rachel to Jinkee Pacquiao. If they cited Rachel some, there's perhaps because the ravages of child-bearing have taken its toll on Jinkee, who has four children.

Businessman/sportsman Bong Tan spent part of Valentine's day at an exclusive sweet party in Tondo, hardly the place you'd expect the son of tycoon Lucio Tan to be celebrating.

It was not a Valentines party, but a three-way celebration hosted by the Barcelona team owner for super Bowl Lee's 23rd birthday his being named MVP of the recently-concluded PBL conference, and the team's second runner-up finish.

Bong also invited PBL chair Mikee Romero and commissioner Chito Trinidad for the office that both had previous connections with.

It was not really difficult to find the place. There was a big streamer that greeted the birthday boy fronting the mansion where the party was being held. The streamer even had logos of the sponsors on it.

Being keenly trained a sniffle before he arrived at the party, but he said even if he had caught the action, that wouldn't have stopped him from attending the celebration.

Brazilian coach Laurence Chongson related that some guys in the neighborhood were chasing each other with knives just before Bong arrived.

I couldn't tell if he was serious or not.

Muay thai chief shot dead inside gym

By Mari Anthony Reyes and Beverly Natividad

HEAD OF THE CHIEF ROBERT VALDEZ was shot dead reportedly by one of his former wards yesterday right inside the national training center in Philippines in Pasig.

Police have fingered Jessrey Pamuti, a former member of the national team and a muay thai instructor of the Philippine army, as the suspect.

Witnesses, including awesome close to Valdez, said another former coach and national player was responsible for the shooting. The witnesses said the former coach shot Valdez while two national athletes were intervening up inside the training facility and while the rest of the national squad were attending a seminar.

The suspect reportedly fled the scene after the shooting, bringing with him the weapon, whose caliber the police have not yet identified.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping, who immediately went to the Medieval City where Valdez was rushed, described the incident as "unfortunate."

"I'm told he hoped the athletes' morale won't get affected by tragedy considering that the country is considered a powerhouse in muay thai, where it emerged overall champion in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games and runner-up in the 2007 edition.

"Whatever it is, we accept responsibility with what happened because it occurred in our premises," said the PSC chief, who immediately ordered for a report from his security forces detailed at the venue.

POC Higher Ilarcel said the police are still trying to find the motive for the shooting while Angping was at a loss as to how the suspect managed to slip a gun inside the training venue where he had previously issued an order that all firearms be deposited at the Philsports complex's entry point.

More than half of 3,000-plus members of the national training pool are reinforcements for armed forces, and may have access to firearms.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco declined to comment until a thorough report was made.

Valdez was in the thick of preparations for the Battle of the Bora, a semi-pro event among members of the national team, training pool and the champions from the emerged from the division championships of the Philippines Olympic Festival.

VALDEZ

Valdez was credited for putting the sport into the mainstream in the '90s after having studied it in Thailand. He served as fight coach to celebrities Bobbit Padilla, Andy Ant Santos, Olongo Ibarra and Angel Locsin.

LeBron, Cavs torch Bucks; Lakers score

LEBRON James puts up a jumper against Milwaukee's Richard Jefferson. The Cleveland star scored 34 points in the third period alone.

MILWAUKEE—LEBRON JAMES SCORCHED the Milwaukee Bucks with a season-high 58 points in the Cleveland Cavaliers' 113-100 road victory on Friday.

It was James' seventh career 50-point game and his second of the season after hitting 52 against the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden earlier this month.

James tallied 24 points in the third quarter alone when he knocked down five 3-pointers to help the Cavaliers take control with a 35-25 advantage in the period.

"Once I started to get it going, whew!" James told reporters.

The 6-foot-8 forward, last year's leading NBA scorer, added nine assists and five rebounds as Cleveland improved to 42-11 to claim the best winning percentage in the Eastern Conference.

"What an unbelievable performance by LeBron," gushed Cleveland coach Mike Brown. "I've been around him for four years now and I get amazed at some of the things he does. That was spectacular."

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 11 of his game-high 39 points in overtime to propel the Los Angeles Lakers to a 113-111 win over the New Orleans Hornets.

Lakers veteran guard Derek Fisher forced the extra session when he nailed a game-tying three-pointer with 34 seconds remaining after Antawn Jamison's apparent rebuttal by the visitors.

Rasual Butler led the way with 21 points for New Orleans, which outscored Los Angeles 32-19 in the final period but lost the game nonetheless on DJ Mbenga's throw.

Bryant, the NBA's reigning MVP, drank off 10-for-27 regulation shooting by making all three of his shots in overtime as the NBA-best Lakers (45-10) were three-time straight games.

"I wanted to attack, I was missing a lot of easy ones," Bryant told reporters. "It was important for me to take my time and gather myself for (shots)."

Sprinkled Pau Gasol scored 20 points and 12 rebounds while Lamar Odom finished with 12 points and 17 rebounds for Los Angeles.

Hornets All-Star point guard Chris Paul had 15 points and added 16 assists before fouling out with 3:31 left in overtime.

NBA Results

(All times Philippine time)

Cleveland 113, Milwaukee 100

Utah 101, Toronto 87

Boston 105, Charlotte 91

Sacramento 97, Golden State 93

Memphis 102, Washington 97

New Orleans 113, Los Angeles Lakers 111 (OT)

Minnesota 108, Chicago 98

Houston 107, Detroit 97

Indiana 103, Phoenix 98

Oklahoma City 113, Portland 98

Atlanta 98, at Dallas 93 (OT)

Go Army shapes up for triple crown campaign

UNDEFEATED COLT GO ARMY SETS out on the Santa Ana track as he looks to others ready to prove their worth in the running of the 2009 Philracom Chairman's Cup, a high stakes local cup race in the coveted Triple Crown championship set this afternoon at the Saddles and Clubs Leisure Park in Nasi, Cavite.

Fresh off an easy runaway victory recently at the newly-opened racetrack, the multiple stakes winning chestnut colt will be gunning for victory for number 12 and 6 others in its further quest on his look at this year's prestigious triple race classic for three-year-olds.

The venerable two-year-old champion of 2008 has so far won six major races and has earned in excess of P6.5-million for his connections led by owner and breeder Hermino "Hermie" Esguerra.

Recently honored PSA Jockey of the Year awardee Jonathan Hernandez is not to ride Go Army, a local brand of Silliman out of J.Apparent, for the 1,000-meter journey.

Expected to put up a good challenge to Go Army are classy Elliot Heaven heat and Rhea's Gold, set to be skippered by jockeys Ariel Tanzioco and John Alvin Guce, respectively.

Others in the hunt for the P2-million cash are Emperor of Australia, Mystic Liberty, Dream Stallion and Sonat Ranger. Go Army's saddleman which will succumber the honor of the multi-awarded Hermie Esguerra.

"Go Army is definitely in top shape and we expect a strong performance from him," explained trainer Cleato "Boy" Rivera.

BY TOP CHOICE
at Santa Ana Park

Race 1—(Pedal Girl)—Cloud Flower (3, Tanong Jr.); Fighting Hill, Meadow Lark (5, Guevarra Jr.)

Race 2—(Pedal Girl)—Cloud Flower (3, Tanong Jr.); Fighting Hill, Meadow Lark (5, Guevarra Jr.)

Race 3—(2)(3)—Super Lagoon (2, Valerio Jr.); Wing (1, Royal Friend (7)

Race 4—(2)(7)—Chris The Great (2, Sta. Ingracias Jr.); Immortal Jade (3, Manguerra)

Race 5—(Pedal Girl)—Sky The Elephant, Mirror (7-1, Mc Laren); Sing (8, Friendly Fire (3, Prince Garin (2, Blessing (6)

Race 6—(2)(3)—Super Lagoon (2, A Command (3, Blue Ocean (1, Chaka Khan (6)

Race 7—(Pedal Girl)—Sky The Elephant, Sonic (2, Pedestrian (3, Perfect Time (5, Promotion (2, Lethal Strike (4)

Race 8—(2)(3)—Arthropod (3, Donald Dave (6, Sa Cayetano (2, Juliet's Pearl (2)

Race 9—(2)(3)—Arthropod (3, Donald Dave (6, Sa Cayetano (2, Juliet's Pearl (2)

Race 10—(Pedal Girl)—Cloud Flower (3, Royal King (12, Jacob Jewel (11, Mirror (8 Jay (10, Tanglao (4, Red Hot Rhea (1)

STRIKER Cristina de los Reyes of the WP girls' under-16 squad celebrates the first of her two goals during the RP-Guam friendly recently at the Ateneo pitch. The Filipinas won, 2-1.

Pacman tennis qualifying round up

THE QUALIFYING ROUNDS OF THE First Pacquiao-Antonio Cup Davis Tennis Championships resumes today at the Acropolis Clubhouse in Pasig City.

Filipino ring icons Manny Pacquiao and sportswoman Rosel Antonio hammer a huge field of tennis enthusiasts who will vie for big cash prizes, trophies and gifts.

The finals will be held on March 1 at the Ateneo Rizal and Tennis Club.

Pacquiao and Antonio agreed to put up the event in further promote the growth of tennis in the country and encourage young players to pick up the sport.

Organized by Dando Ito Torres and Saul Rivera, the Pacquiao-Antonio Cup is sanctioned by Philippine Tennis Association (Philta).

For more info, please call TOPDOG at 0915-6406 or call coach Dando at (02) 8117804.

Golden Wheel honors rally king Silverio

PHILIPPINE AMUSEMENTS AND GAMING Corporation (Pagcor) chair Efraim Genuino will be the special guest speaker at the Golden Wheel Awards which pays tribute to the top achievers of Philippine Motorsports tomorrow at the Pagcor Grand Theater in Paranaque.

Now in its sixth year, the Golden Wheel Awards will honor one of the legendary pillars of Philippine Motorsports into the Hall of Fame—leading car and rally champion Dante Silverio.

Silverio was then one of the prominent figures that made RP racing quite a spectacle during the 70's just before making a big move to cross over to Toyota coach in the PBA.

Silverio also competed abroad in the Macau Grand Prix, the Singapore Grand Prix, the Malaysian Grand Prix and the Southern Cross Rally in Australia.

The three-time all-Asia overall Golden Wheel International Driver and National Driver of the Year recipient.

The Golden Wheel Awards Committee, chaired by Motorsports godfather Johnny Tan, will pick the winner from the champions of various motorsports disciplines.

NUMBERS Jan Giles Oliveros (Kyklop Mini Racing Corporation) and co-driver Raymond Yeo Pare (Lucky Strike) hit out another Go Diving Rally Cars Series (Subaru) last week (Subaru) and Rosario Go (Mitsubishi).

Sunday SPORTS

E-mail: sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/sports

UNHERALDED Rene-Mie David scores his biggest pool victory.

David brings down a 'Goliath'

By Ray Loarca

BAGUIO CITY—BUSING JOHN RENE-Mie "Rene" David slammed the biggest scalp of his budding career yesterday, toppling pool giant Rivon "Bata" Reyes, 9-7, and barging into the quarterfinals of the Manny Villar Cup Pasaybuhan leg at the Benito Center of this City Baguio.

Eyeing as a 7-4 deficit, the 19-year-old David swept the next five racks to stun the 54-year-pool maestro and boost his chances for his first major title.

Other Last 16 matches saw former national champion Lee Vann Corteza subdue last year's finished by mike Pedrella (rack, 9-7, and preventing fight Geronimo of Manila, Rolando dela Cruz by winners Candy Hills, 9-2.

Former world No. 1 Francisco "Efren Jr." Bonsubamin dodged the upset as wielded by another veteran, Jordan Lagnaga, posting a crumbling 9-7 victory and moving closer toward the P500,000 champion's purse in the event presented by Senator Manny Villar's Villamin Tabing sa Pagtulong ng Philippine Sports and supported by Camella Communities.

Though Reyes took the first three racks, the diminutive David kept his poise to keep the event, 3-3. Reyes, however, regained line of the next five frames to regain control, 7-4.

However, David, a prized find from Candon, Ilocos Sur, pounced on Reyes' miscues to seal the win.

"It's a big big accomplishment to beat the idol of all billiards players," said the 5-11 winner over Bonsubamin Primus in the opener, in Filipino.

Several second rounders being played at press time include the rematch pitting last year's untold No. 7 Dennis Orcollo against Ricky Yrneo, and former double world champion Ronnie Alonzo against Villamin Villarex.

Also eyeing quarterfinal seats were Warren Kiamco versus Benjie Guevarra and Roberto Gomez against Mike Takayama.

The 30-year-old Orcollo struggled before disposing of John Sabacat, 9-7, erasing an opener for his first ride in the latest hopping series now on its sixth leg.

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BATTLE ROYALE Jun Jutson of the Red team (right) and Tonio Veloso of the Black team both it out during a polo match tuneup at the Alabang Country Club. Red skipper Anthony Barilla, Cobi Aguirre and Charlie Peruzzo made up the Red squad, while Hammond cut a 7-2 victory over the Black team, which was led by Ignacio Bordeos, Adrianne Garcia and Jerome Hernandez.

Canlubang...

From page A4 »

Meanwhile, Rene M. Mica of Negros Golf and Country Club scored a hole-in-one on the 168-yard par-3 fourth hole at Apo using an 8-iron to win a Honda motorcycle. Mica won in the company of Ed Godoy, Roderick Salcedo and Mac Pineda when he shot his first ace in 20 years to finish with 37 points for the day.

The Platinum sponsors of the annual event are ABS-CBN Cable Channels and Other Media Group, Airbus, Boeing, Business Mirror, Metro, MTV Philippines, Radio Mindanao Network and Solar Sports.

Action Asia, Bombo Radyo, Crossover 105.1, People Asia, Royal Caribbean and SFM 99.5 are the major backers while the other supporters are Pagoo, Ralph Broadcasting, Century Park and Info-in-one sponsor Honda Cars.

The Montrose scores

CHAMPIONS—Centenary (20) 3-10-10-(32); Lumbo 434 (159-179-96); Rabang 396 (102-125-169); Manlo Golf 388 (100-139-149); Iloilo Golf Club (21) 3-10-10-(39); Iloilo 381 (109-89-183); Mercedes Plantation 356 (120-93-143); Lapu-Golf 338 (119-80-89); Pinoy Amateur (10) 0-0-0-(10).

CADETS—Alday 394 (120-125-129); Orchard 371 (119-128-124); Cruise Industries 370 (120-128-122); Subic 371 (119-130-122); West Point 364 (125-127-112); Manila Southwoods 357 (118-121-118); Cavite Golf Club 352 (120-109-123); Magna 320 (122-123-115); Camp Aguinaldo 341 (102-112-127); Villamor 332 (108-103-121).

INVITATIONALS—Mother Ideal 388 (129-129-130); Ayala Golf (21) 3-10-10-(44); Riviera (21) 3-10-10-(31); Diamond 385 (129-126-130); PGA Golfers Columbia 349 (110-120-119); Philippine Navy 340 (130-109-101); Makiki 339 (110-120-109); Tiara Verde 338 (110-120-108); Alabang 331 (102-109-120); Manila 318 (104-102-112); Bagac 310 (102-98-110); Greenhills Golfers 308 (98-100-110); Cavite Golf 300 (103-99-98); Alabang Golf 300 (101-99-100); Camp Aguinaldo 300 (101-99-100); Clovis Plantation (20) (10-10-10); Eagle Ridge (20) (10-10-10).

TENDERFOOT—Clovis Golfers (21) 3-10-10-(32); Iloilo (21) 3-10-10-(30); Lumbo (20) (10-10-10); Lubang (20) (10-10-10); Iloilo (21) 3-10-10-(30); Mimosa Golf (20) (10-10-10); Clovis Golfers 340; Crystal Springs (20) (10-10-10); Iloilo Jaro 332 (80-80-80); Club Intramuros 332 (80-80-80); Alabang (20) (10-10-10); Victoria (20) (10-10-10); Tiradora (20) (80-80-80); South Cotabato (20) (80-80-80); Cotabato (20) (80-80-80); San Antonio (21) 3-10-10-(31); Canlubang (20) (10-10-10); Kadalinman 341 (70-80-80); Batangas (20) (10-10-10); Cantabaco (20) (10-10-10); Iloilo Golfers (21) 3-10-10-(30); Tiradora (21) 3-10-10-(30); Tiradora 324 (80-80-80); Iloilo Golfers (21) 3-10-10-(30); Alabang (20) (10-10-10); Victoria (20) (10-10-10); Iloilo

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- **Junk shops** strive to do more with less trash /B3
- **Co-op turns** waste into novelty items /B3

Sunday BIZ

Taking on the Mactan challenge

MACTAN, CEBU—When the Cousteau popularized the seas with rich marine life, he decided to give the Gilutongan channel facing this tourist enclave more than its fair share.

Magnificent sharks, an enormous species of corals, gliding manta rays, bright aquarium fish and graceful dolphins are just some of the richness of this vital watersway that separates Mactan from the island of Bilangin.

With such a rich repository of colors and vibrant life under the sea, it is no wonder that this small coastal barangay about 30 minutes away from Cebu City has become a major tourist capital.

No less than international chains such as Hilton and Shangri-la decided to invest

TURN TO PAGE B2

AyalaLand PREMIER

A SOOTHING ENVIRONMENT. Moving into the East Tower at One Serendra, you wonder why your life is filled with the calm of seemingly endless possibilities. Is it the invigorating laps of the pool you look forward to every morning? Or the yoga and Pilates sessions with friends in the gym? Perhaps it is playtime with your children, exploring the lush tropical gardens? One afternoon over tea, it occurs to you what it is exactly. It's knowing that you can do all these things when you want to—right here, at home—cocooned in a suburban retreat that often drives you to forget you're in the middle of the city.

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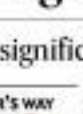
EAST TOWER at ONE Serendra

Rowers go against the tide, set up new hangout

Measuring significance

THE PEOPLE WHO MET Henry usually knew called him anything but successful. He attended a good Ivy League school but after that, he never seemed to catch with much of anything. He randomly shot grades, he took a position as a teacher. But he never resigned because he didn't approve of the way the administration handled disciplinary issues with the students. The next year, he bartered his lunchtime tutors a small private school, but when his headmaster became sick, he didn't have the ability to sustain it...so the school was closed.



Occasionally, Henry worked in his family's grocery line he had no desire to make a career of it. He liked writing in a journal, something he wanted while to school. He dabbled in poetry. And every now and then, he got something he never took a small journal published by some friends.

When a friend worked to use he him to get a job as a private tutor for a wealthy family on Staten Island in New York. Henry took it. For three hours for only two years. So Henry went back to his tutoring, and the friend who had gotten him the tutoring job for him stay in a shack on his property. Later, the friend let him live in his house as a kind of headquarters. After that, Henry moved back home, even though he was in his 30s.

For the next decade or so, Henry traveled a little, he spoke, consoling, social issues and he got a few pieces of his writing published. In his last years, he worked on his journals, hoping that maybe someday they would be published. He died of atherosclerosis in his mid-40s.

Leaving no mark

Though he never married and didn't seem to make much of a mark on the world, he was always very passionate. He once refused to pay a tax as a war protest and it landed him in jail. When a friend asked him, "What are you doing in jail?" He was irritated that his aunt paid his tax and he was let out of jail after only one day. Henry's protest didn't do anything to change the government's policy concerning the war, but it did help to galvanize some of his ideas and prompted him to put them into writing. He called his essay "Resistance to Civil Government."

In case you haven't already guessed it, Henry's full name was Henry David Thoreau, his essay was later named "Civil Disobedience," and the friend who sponsored him and visited him in jail was none other than Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Thoreau didn't have much to show for his years on earth. He didn't fight any great battles, lead any great movements, or create any great organizations. What he did is keep growing, keep learning, keep working to improve himself. His search to grow beyond himself never ended. And the result of that growth came to fruition in his writings, most of which were published after his death.

Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience, which was published in 1849 (12 years before his death), is considered a masterpiece today.

"Under a government which imprisons any unjustly," wrote Thoreau in his essay, "the true place for a just man is also in prison ... Thereby better is a short term in which a free man can abide with honor."

On second thought

Thomas Carlyle called "Civil Disobedience" the one truly original American contribution to western civilization. More importantly, its ideas made a lasting impact on the world. Fifty years after Thoreau wrote his essay, Mohandas Gandhi, India's greatest leader, was inspired by Thoreau's ideas as civil disobedience. And it set him on a course of action that led to India's independence from British rule. One hundred years after Thoreau's death, Martin Luther King Jr. based his practices he advocating civil rights on the words of Thoreau and the non-aggressive example of Gandhi.

Editors' the following John Maxwell Training Program this March: Developing The Inside Within You Workshop on March 17-18, 2009 to be facilitated by Maxwell Certified trainer Pamela Kerr; 360 Leader on March 31-April 1 with Anthony Angelli on to find Auditioner Call Angelo Lauderdale Consultancy at 687-2874 or 0917-8511115. You can also email us at deepbluesprig@yahoo.com, or visit our website at www.inspirephilippines.com for more information.)

By Sharon Rebas-Plazzarte

BEING A TEAM SPORT, DRAGON boat racing promotes not only physical fitness but also camaraderie among its members.

However, bonding among rowers need not stop when practices and competitions end, said members of the Philippine Youth Rowing Society (Pyros), a club affiliated with the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation.

Thus, seventeen Pyros members thought it best to make available a venue where they and their colleagues can spend lighter moments together.

Those paddlers put up a bar and restaurant called Rower's Den.

"We had our grand opening in December, but the planning took place in January last year. The main purpose of this bar is for the dragon boat community and we in Pyros, as owners, to have a hangout where we can get together and bond," explained Nonie Chavez, the one who came up with the idea of "mixing business with enterprise."

"[Rower's Den] was just up not just to earn money, but also to make people aware of our sport and to help uplift rowing as a sport in the country," adds owner Saul Dalusbo, who is a managing partner of the enterprise.

Chavez says the group initially intended to put up the fun and restaurant in Quezon City, but they eventually found a home on the second level of Harbour Square at the CCP Complex, a few strokes away, so to speak, from the dragon boat community's training ground.

First of its kind

And what better way to entice customers to hang out in Rower's Den than to check the place with dragon boat knick-knacks. Once hang above the bar while photos and other memorabilia adorn its walls. One spot is dedicated to the Pyros team, which includes various photos and a framed uniform the team used when they competed in the Ati-Atihan Cross World Championship, mainly in Boracay, Philippines, last year. Another side has photographs of the country's different dragon boat venues. The restaurant sees paper place mats with photos prints of the Pyros team in action.

"It's the first of its kind," says Nicky Ramos, referring to the concept of having a dragon boat-themed bar and restaurant.

Rower's Den is the group's first business venture but getting started did not pose a huge problem since many of them have experiences in handling their own individual businesses.

"Some of us are in the food business, so our land an idea on how to go about the venture—from purchasing to promotions. We also had difficulties but it was easier than the experiences of those starting from scratch," Nonny Cagoy says.

Aside from being paddlers and entrepreneurs, the managing team of Rower's Den is a mix of individuals with increasingly varied professions. Lawyers, dentists, events organizers, bank employees, medical representatives, executive of a corporation and school administrators among others.

So how do they manage their time?

"We each have assignments as to how to go about everything. And a day is assigned to each one to take charge of the business," Nicky Clementson explains.

The group also finally recalls how at the start they did everything themselves, from taking orders to serving the food and manning the cashier. But as the business grew, they had to hire additional other tasks as part of the learning process in the world of entrepreneurship. And although not all team members of the Pyros involved in Rower's Den, others also contribute by sharing their expertise like one teammate who designed the bar's logo.

Aside from the food, Rower's Den also offers an assortment of tasty and affordable food and pulutan.

Best-sellers include Pizzas and Nachos, Steak Tornados and Stuffed Pechichay.

As paddlers often go out to groups, this watering hole is a perfect place to unwind, the group says.

"Pyros is a big group which started in 1991, so we also have old members, if ever they go back to rowing, to restart up here, we encourage old and rekindle their rounds of their life as a rower," Chavez shares, adding that they also request rowing teams to submit their videos to be played inside the bar.

"We also have paddlers anniversary who bring their families here and show them their photos displayed in the restaurant," adds Ramos.

"While other rowers, who are also into other sports, bring their friends along here and brag about this water sport they are involved in," says Dagoy.

ROWER'S DEN near CCP glen-visitors a whole packed on the first of rowers

Target market

The group also said Rower's Den has also seen regular customers outside the dragon boat community. Rower's Den is also open for special events, private parties and receptions.

Feedback from customers is very encouraging, the group says. Members of the management team have been regularly coming up with promos to further enliven the place. Of course, paddlers get special discounts.

ROWER'S DEN is open from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. from Monday to Saturday. It is closed on Sundays. For more information, call 0917-5511115.

Taking on the Mactan . . .

From page B1

in large resort hotels here to cater to the steady train of local and foreign visitors.

Those international and local boat builder, however, fear that money-toting visitors will soon go elsewhere as the natural beauty of the fragile marine ecosystem that supports the billion-peso tourism industry here.

Lost them and they lose their revenue.

This realization spurred the revival of Oceanscape, a marine environment advocacy group composed of different groups with a stake in the health of Mactan.

It is dedicated to protect and rehabilitate the marine environment of Mactan island and the connected ecosystems.

A similar group was actually set up in 2000 but it fell by the wayside because of factors such as lack of commitment and focus.

The present crop of members has thus committed itself to not repeating the mistakes of the past.

Oceanscape president Jose Antonio Abiotis tells the boaters that the group was reorganized in July last year through the efforts of the Philippine Business for Social Progress because of the urgent need to take major steps to keep environmental degradation at bay while ensuring continued livelihood for the over 35,000 families who live in the area.

"We are organizing the different stakeholders and educating them so that they will realize that they are sitting on a resource ecosystem that is so valuable," says Abiotis, who also chairs the Visayas committee of PBSP. "We have a vested interest in together improving the environment."

Abiotis says Mactan can boast of being one of the best dive sites in the country and among the most accessible especially to foreigners, considering that it is just around 20 minutes from the Mactan International Airport.

"It really is quite unique," says Abiotis, an avid diver himself.

Since PBSP spearheaded the revival of Oceanscape last year, the membership has been growing steadily. It now counts the major hotels and resorts among its members, as well as the souvenir shops, restaurants, real estate developers, dive shops and watersliding schools.

Raymond Dagg, general manager of the Shangri-La Mactan Resort and Spa, says Shangri-La is no stranger to the issues of coastal management in its immediate environment, but also to reach the lives of the community in which Shangri-La operates.

Sir Dagg, who also sits as vice president of Oceanscape, the motivation is simple: If we do not take care of the earth around, we will not have a beautiful resort.

With more hotels and resorts coming together, it is hoped that there will be equitable rules and guidelines for the management of the marine environment.

This means that there will be even more enforcement of prohibitions on throwing trash into the sea and the occasional extraction of marine resources like fish and shells.

It is also the group's goal to bring about more order in the holding of water sports or recreation activities just so that swimmers or divers on one part of the marine system will not be over by the jet ski, for instance, from another system.

Abiotis says they have also written efforts to establish a decompression facility on Mactan Island to treat decompression sickness. This will help bring in more divers to the island since they know that there are appropriate medical facilities on hand to care they get sick.

Abiotis says he is also very positive pro-tected areas on both sides of the channel to further improve the marine life," he says.

Oceanscape certainly has its work cut out for it, especially since it takes years for any efforts to bear fruit. But Abiotis is confident that the seeds of closer cooperation have been planted for the benefit of Mactan Island.

"This is a kind of work that cannot beyond boundaries and political groups," Abiotis says. "We are all just working together to bring the marine environment of Mactan to its full potential."

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Junk shops strive to do more with less trash

By Chaguie Medina
INQUIRER

PATRONIZABLE FORAGING AT THE bottom of the economic chain, junk shops across the metropolis are not immune to the losses wrought by the global financial crisis.

Recycling and junk shop owners, big and small, pointed to October last year as the start of the sudden fall in the buying prices of their trade staples—originally aluminum, copper and iron) and used plastic products, bottles and paper.

One reason for the price slump echoed by many of the small entrepreneurs was the slowdown in construction work in China after the holding of the Beijing Olympics.

In particular, scrap iron—which used to fetch between P21 and P30 per kilo—is now selling for only P5 to P7 per kilo.

"But it's really a global phenomenon that is affecting many countries," says Dindo Ganzales, founding president of Metro Manila Linis Ganda Inc., a non-government organization dedicated to urban waste recycling. "There's really nothing our government can do about this," she says.

The culprit: none from both ends of the business spectrum. From generators of garbage to those that generate or recycle waste.

A BGY weighs scrap metal before selling it to a junk shop in Davao City. INQUIRER

Price slump

Frank manufacturing companies are not availing from production, thereby affecting the volumes of scrap materials. Those that buy plastic waste for recycling are also decreasing their production. Used cell phone dealers in them used in dropping bags, for example, used to sell for P9.00 per kilo, now they are bought for only P5.00.

"The factories don't want to collect from anymore," Sheila says. Entities or wooden scrap collection users pushed around communities to buy or collect junk from households are one of the programs institutionalized by Lane Goods. These have produce employment to more than junk shops only while, at the same time, acting as catchable between unsalable household waste and junk shops.

From hard plastics, to cured paper waste, to broken bottles, prices have dropped to levels that have dampened the entrepreneurial spirit of junk shops and even the factories boys. What used to be P5 per kilo of paper or cartons is now bought for only P2 per kilo.

"Even Say Miguel beer bottles that used to be fetch P1 each is now only worth P0.50," says Sheila. So, our centers to buy broken glass measure secondary, she adds.

Aling Lucky Bautista owns a medium-sized junk shop that was started by her husband, now deceased, in 1970. The middle-class in prices late but soon has been hard-hit these days. She says many small buying shops that had sprung up in the last couple of years have either closed or is doing financial problems.

As in junk, other scrap iron was being bought for P21 per kilo, a lot of households suddenly took the time to clean up their garages or storage rooms to cash in on the bonanza. This led into a buying frenzy that was aggravated by the misdemeaning of new junk shops.

Junk shops struggling

When prices dropped almost overnight, many junk shops lost money.

For Aling Lucky, it's a wait-and-see situation in the next weeks as she tries to meet the payment for the monthly rental of her place. There's a big possibility that she will close the decades-old shop, she said. "Dapat mag-negosyo na iyon. If things don't show any improvement soon.

However, Aling Lucky's problem, shared by owners of other junk shops of different sizes not only in Metro Manila but in other urban cities in the country, does not diminish the predicament that the business of buying and selling of recyclable materials.

The Technology Resource Center, the government's livelihood training arm, continues to offer short courses for interested start-up entrepreneurs. There is still a demand," says Bautista. Laments, who heads the environment-based training division.

The business of managing a junk shops remains viable, especially as the global movement for recycling garbage and trash management grows. The recent experience of junk shop owners had to adjust to such these problems after getting caught with tons of scrap bought at high prices but could only be sold at lower amounts.

Sure enough, many of the small junk shops have changed hands, with the previous owner selling the business because of an inability of known hedge financing to cover for trading losses.

There are other concerns being raised by junk shop owners, one among them is the uncontrolled importation of local government policies. Depending on the industry given by local politicians, issues that must be taken into the "competitive" pressure incurred by the (GI) supported trash exchanges, stained by owners of other junk shops of different sizes not only in Metro Manila but in other urban cities in the country, does not diminish the predicament that the business of buying and selling of recyclable materials.

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Stringent policies

There have also been instances when LGUs have set more stringent policies with regards to the employment of scavengers, some of which had been cited in the section behind the use of petty crime to contain troubles. There are also age limits over many of these, were overwhelmingly call children.

The catch-line refrain, which seems to be temporary that the ravishing junk shop owners had experienced is quickly receding as an unfortunate incident in their business memory. There is still value in junk, they say.

Sheila says that that is the time that the government should push its support for the garbage-recycling movement. "Local governments are no longer implementing waste segregation," she laments; this is a given law that mandates households to separate biodegradable and non-biodegradable garbage.

The idiom, Sheila says, will keep open dumpsites from quickly piling up with all the unwanted trash of Metro Manila, paving to land, water and air pollutants, as well as threatening the health of nearby communities.

Sustaining waste segregation helps roll too for junk shops, improving their chances of survival in their trying times.

Squeezing new goods out of pineapple

From page B1

busy after harvest season.

The LPMC also taps the inmates to train and trainer for them the pineapple fibers that they buy at P6.50 per gram or P6,500 per kilo, making productive the idle time of inmates serving jail terms.

Ramos, a former textile factory worker in Bulacan, said LPMC was inspired to engage in pineapple leaves processing by the abundance of the raw material in Camarines Norte, with pineapple being one of the primary crops of the province, aside from coconuts and rice.

Aside on its second year of production, LPMC has produced tonnes of piece worth of the pineapple fabrics which local government units and several schools in Camarines Norte purchase for their official uniforms.

To save the project, Ramos said they need 25 members to a six-month training program to handloom weaving. The trainees now compose the regular weavers in a workshop inside the 1.3-hectare LPMC compound.

BAGS and fabric (right) are made more lovely by pina.

Process

Ramos said the handloom weaving process includes knotting, twisting and warping, can unwind at times after the orders before the actual work of fabric weaving could be done.

He said it takes 2,400 strands of knotted pineapple fibers to make a 30-inch metre, 52-yard long pineapple fabric.

Handloom weaving has two major portions...the weft, the vertical strands of fiber, and the warp, the horizontal strands of fiber, which make up the woven pineapple fabrics.

Using a foot-driven mechanism, the weft moves like a canoe in an alternating manner in which the warp is made to slide across using a simple harness called shuttle, which contains the twisted knotted pineapple fibers.

Mindy Goodding, a weaver, said she could finish an average of two yards of hand loom fabric in 12 hours in a day, so that it takes her less than a month to finish weaving the warp into the 2,400 strands on the weft to make the fine and silky pineapple fabric.

Rey Dimasuay, the decorative fiber coordinator, said the decorative pineapple fiber are derived from fresh leaves measuring 2 to 2.5 feet long.

It requires three harvests of leaves and two skilled workers to work on a decorticating machine to produce an average output of 0.3-0.4 kilo per day.

Dimasuay said that with the assistance from the RP-Spain Joint Commission Project, the LPMC was able to launch the production of decorticated pineapple fibers that they sell to textile makers and paper factories outside the region, aside from providing the raw materials for the waste products that are used to make handmade paper for their workshop.

Founded on Sept. 11, 1997 by Sally C. Jacinto, a retired grade school teacher, the LPMC started as a "pakiusapan" association with original members of 15 mother vendors and farmers and

gin air-conditioned vehicles that ply the Labo-Daet route, caters production and processing in partnership with the provincial government of Camarines Norte, runs production assisted by the provincial government, Department of Agriculture and the University of the Philippines-Los Banos, and coconut nursery project with the help of UCBS, GIF Coco Foundation.

LPMC has provided jobs to 20 women

Rowers go against. . .

From page B6

or certain down-pour presentation of their FISAP IDs.

"We like have a theme's blight, which we plan to hold once a month. We want to invite other dragon boat teams to host it so they would kind of years the event," says Ong said more.

The group agreed that Rowers's crew is still a work in progress but members of the team were satisfied with the initial event at this early stage.

Asked what lessons from deep on boat training they can apply to running the business, they say: Train, work and to learn to outperform. Success, just like paddling in a dragon boat where each one has its own strengths and weaknesses, they need to know how to balance everything to ensure a smooth sailing pace.

In video the dragonist calls "Power leap!" Rowers encounter will speed up their strokes as their paddle their way to business success.

For inquiries email me/ http://rowersfest.multiply.com

Sunday BIZ

2009 PMA Officers and Directors with Industry Officer, Sec. Joey Concepcion, Presidential Consultant for Entrepreneurship

PMA CELEBRATES 55TH ANNIVERSARY AND INDUCTION CEREMONIES

The Philippine Marketing Association is the oldest existing industry organization in the Philippines. Established in January 27, 1954, the association continues to provide government and the business community high level guidance on the marketing discipline.

As the Philippines is foreseen to face severe economic activity and growth brought about by the global economic challenges, the theme - Marketing for Humanity: Let's Make a Difference gives inspiration and hope that a new crisis or marketing may be the solution. The versatility, innovativeness and out-of-the box thinking of a marketer will be put to a test.

PMA is an organization that can be an expert resource for its brand partners in the field of socially responsible branding and marketing. We can leverage the purchasing power of consumers and the marketing power of brands to raise support for humanitarian causes.

Recently, the Philippine Marketing Association held its 55th year Anniversary and Induction of 2009 Officers and Board of Directors at Hotel Intercontinental. The new set of Board was inducted by Secretary Joey Concepcion Presidential Consultant for Entrepreneurship and founder of GO NEGOSYO, in the speech, Secretary Concepcion stated that we should not be prisoners of "fear" but should remain positive. He projects that since the Philippines is a "service oriented" country, 2009 will remain bullish.

For more information, please contact the PMA Secretariat, tel #634-4600, 634-3722, email: pmimarketing@pldtdsl.net.

2009 PMA President, Modesto Roca giving her Inaugural Speech

Squeezing new goods out of pineapple

By Joan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LABO, CAMARINES Norte—Finding ways to turn waste materials into something useful, a cooperative here has ventured into pineapple leaves processing, which has made it the biggest producer of handloom fabrics, brushed fibers for textile production and novelty items in Bicol.

With its winners, the Labo Progressive Multipurpose Cooperative (LPMC) has provided direct employment to some 20 women and indirect employment to more than 400 farming families as suppliers of hand-scraped and -combed fibers, which command a price of between P300 to P350 per yard.

LPMC has also contracted the labor of the Camarines Norte Provincial Jail inmates.

And from the discarded pineapple fibers and scraps, the LPMC produces brushed fibers—raw materials for textile production.

Brushed fibers currently fetch a price of P250 per kilo. The scraps are turned into handmade paper and novelty items.

Jeronimo Ramos, the handloom and handmade project coordinator, said they depend on farming families all over the province to supply LPMC with the raw materials, making them

CO-ON B3

PINEAPPLE is one of the primary products of Camarines Norte in the Southern Tagalog region.

NIMBLY Catching can produce an average of two yards of handloom fabric in 12 hours.

Eraserheads
March 7

John Legend
March 26

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IN THIS ISSUE
All aboard a royal ride /E1
Polo dispute heats up /D1

Sunday LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

Trading my wigs and accessories for running gear

TESSA! Tessa Prieto-Valdes

BY A BIZARRE ROMANCE OF BOLES, my husband, Dennis, and I seem to have switched places. I was flipping through the latest issue of Metro Society, one of the country's leading society magazines, and there he was in a feature, as one of the Hero In Socks.

Meanwhile, I seem to have traded in my Solea stilettos for Nikes and Gokkys. My metal cabinet looks more like his, filled with athletic stuff all of sorts.

After a sabbatical from marathon training, I have finally decided to get back on the Metro bandwagon. My new Nike Lunar Trainers, made of ultra light, SAHA-sound foam, and running gear have displaced my wigs and accessories.

And I recently upgraded my Oakley shades to their new fashioning line, exclusively designed for runners. The eyewear is so advanced, its permanent hydrophobic lens coating eliminates water drops and repels dust, skin oils and lotions, maximizing a smudge-resistance interior. That last line is from the brochure. To me, all I can say is that it's super clear and I can see so much all around.

The drinking more of triathlon these days. It's not enough to accessories for running. There are swimming suits and biking gadgets to consider. I just ordered a custom-made Speedo triathlon suit during the Speedo fashion show at the new, straight out-of-Amsterdam, beautiful Bridals Fashion in McKinley Hill. And then I got a Brilag for a no-sized bike from Bike Town.

But of course, I still need to fit to my beloved "S.U.V." as my kids call my social events, into all these activities. Enter Metro Society. At the launch of their bliss to Oahu issue, it was amazing to be in the audience watching my hubby on stage, along with 14 other well-suited gentlemen, all hand-picked by editor Hazel Manzanares.

Hailing from diverse backgrounds in politics, business, design, show business, law, and in Dennis' case, gambling, these power players all proved that yes, the suit makes the man. It was sweet of Dennis to note his personal style as "whatever Tessa buys me." So I guess since I bought his Emmanuelle Zegna suit, then that makes him my man.

Metro Society put together a night of glitz, glamour and power at Greenbelt 3, sponsored by Arbors, HSBC and Ayala Malls. Creative photographer Jason Probalesia was commissioned to dramatically pose these men in their suits, all taken at the Mandarin Oriental.

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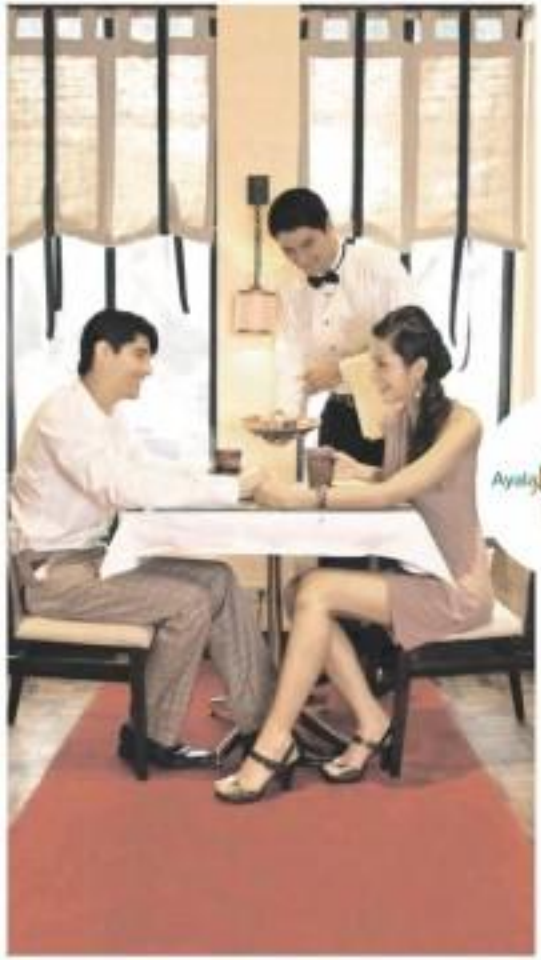

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I ♡ 'em all

QTV'S Dian Dias here Bonifacio Fernandez, Tessa Almoguez, Tonny and Rep. Sonny Angara and cast on Amando and Luiza Cargo

PHILWEB president Dennis Valdes and ABS-CBN's Maurice Olives

SPEEDO friends Karina Gupta, Anna Cristina Matteo, Speedo operations manager Rishi Kumar Srivastava, Sea Princess and Priyanka Gupta

SPEEDO VIP operations Manish Mahtani, Jessica Berenguer-Ross and Miguel Calderon

COOL couple Bing and Nikki Diez

My favorites include style architect Miguel Pardo, looking flawless as always; actress Congressman Sherry Angara, looking playful on a bathroom stool; food entrepreneur Lou de Terry, looking tummy; businessman Juan Pablo Bermudez, looking like a model for his 1907 Hyundai-pinto products; and lawyer Lutz Ramack, looking devilishly dangerous, out of the Billy Dee gie in The Untouchables. Catch the photo exhibit until today at Greenhills 3.

Entrepreneurial siblings

At the event, I bumped into the entrepreneurial Llamas brothers. Youngest sibling Wilson has a nice photo all tabled up now about. These brothers are in business-minded and charitable, too. Aside from their health and nutritional products, they are also concern promoters.

Their latest project is the upcoming concert of Sonalia Cole, the eighteen-time Grammy Award winner behind chart-topping songs like "Unforgettable," "Just Between You and" duet with her father Nat King Cole, recorded after he had passed away. She will be performing in Manila for the first time on March 11, 8 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum.

The show, dubbed "An Unforgettable Evening with Natalie Cole—Live in Manila" will use the multi-platinum artist performing her greatest hits accompanied by a big band with an amazing lyrics section. I'm told the virtual duet is part of the show, so to share that out-of-body experience, call 374-1222, 374-9999 and 913-5000.

Special polo

Speaking of U.E.'s, let me feature the private do in celebration of social events—a twin celebration defined by speed, power and luxury. The Boutique Zobel Financial Polo Club's action-packed this year because it is jointly celebrated by the club's centennial polo season and the Cup's sponsor, Polo Cars, the exclusive importer and distributor of Porsche and Audi in the country.

Described as "A Century of New Thinking," Audi's 2009 slogan wraps an authentic era that capitalized on German industrial advancement. Audi has come again to prove it is a global leader with a new range of models and working rules.

It was a perfect day for polo, with guests enjoying libations from Mike Bayot. Crowd favorites like Jake Zobel of the Porsche White team and Vince Bitong of the Porsche Mocha team were playing exceptionally well.

Other polo aficionados included Bruno Zobel and Theodore Riegel, Porsche Trading Headmaster of Asia, made a grand entrance in a gleaming Porsche 911 Cabriolet joined by the horses and riders. Manila Polo Club president Ramon Ebarsabal and PCC Commodore Robert Coulson Jr. were delighted with the successful event that afternoon.

METRO Society Host Si Shiya Lao-de Tuvo, Sandra Esteban, Lutz Ramack, Gigi Lopuzanda, Dennis Valdes, Joey Tupangco, Juan Pablo Bermudez, Ariel Arce, William Llamas, Jr., Kevin Tan and Alfredo Roco

BRITISH Ambassador Peter Sinclair has a whiskey with Gil

MEN IN Suits photographer Jason Pendleton, an intern Dan Lachmann, Walter Lantin, Missy Burns and Brian Barnes

METRO Society editor Raul Manuel interviews Tessa and Dennis Valdes and Doctor Octavia and girlfriend Rina Laura Chavez

2009 Miss Universe Miss Richard Tin and Brian Lopez

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FUEGO Hotels managing director Alfredo Roco

HANDSOME yachtsmen Juan Pablo Bermejo and Lance Terry

DARKHORSE lawyer Lutz Ramack

BINGO Zobel

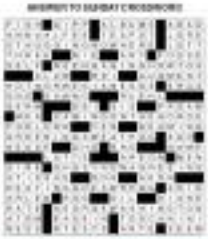
HENRY "Big Boy" Sy, Jr.

INTERVIEWERS brothers Glenn and William Gatmaitan, Jr.

BIRTHDAY girl Malu Gamboa, Metro Society coworker Phil Tsanglao-Asset and manager Jayan Ramirez

STANDING L-R: Mark Faist, David Stirling, Don Zobel, Brandon Coyiuto, (KUO operations director), Ramon Ebarsabal (MPC president), Inigo Zobel and John Bilbao; Kneeling L-R: Alejo Tiozon, Santiago Lobanda, Anthony Garcia and Cole Aguirre

MANILA Polo Club president Ramon Ebarsabal with Robert Coyiuto, Hotel Sp and Resorts' membership center Cea Alcazaren Dingcong



CARA adoption booth

Not all S.E.'s need to be defined by the clubs around. Indeed, our social commitments should move often, focus on the social rather than the event. Take the example of CARA, a group composed of animal lovers who headed together to form Compassion and Responsibility for the Animals (CARA) Welfare Philippines.

CARA is sponsoring an Adoption Booth for dogs and cats at Rockwell's High Street this weekend. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., starting today. No weekend about how US President Barack Obama's network to get a dog for his daughters, but it's just waiting for the right dog because of the natural desire in Washington, D.C.

Concerned animal-welfare activists know who has several adopted cats from a shelter is U.S. Ambassador Kristie Kenney. Wouldn't it be amazing if Ambassador Kenney were to find the right dog for President Obama at the CARA Adoption Booth?

CARA president Nancy Co-Enlayag runs this group also provides spaying and neutering services. If you can't make it to the CARA Adoption Booth, you can still check out possible pets at http://www.caralphil.org/Adoption-Gallery.html. Call 662-5223 for more information.

E-mail the author at inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

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French ambassador to the Philippines visits Cebu

THE AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE TO THE Philippines H.E. Thierry Borja de Mozota presented credentials to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Jan. 15 and is less than a month he made an official visit to Cebu.

The red carpet was extended to him by Michel Lhuillier, Honorary Consul of France in the Visayas, and Mme. Jacqueline Llamas Lhuillier. With the ambassador came the French Embassy's press attaché, Carolle Lucas, who has been in the country almost four years now.

CEBU CEBU

Jaime Piccorossi

Ambassador Borja de Mozota paid a call at the Cebu City Hall to meet acting Mayor Mike Rama and Vice Mayor Hilario Davide III. At the Provincial Capitol, he was welcomed by Governor Gwendolyn Garcia.

The ambassador's first social activity was to meet the French community in Cebu at the Les Amis de la France French Cultural Institute and Language Center. It is also the site of the consulate. Doing the honors were director Louis Thevenin, Alec Guerry and Marie-Anne Buzogis.

Tall, good looking and affable Ambassador **Borja de Mozota greeted everyone** and had eloquent words for Les Amis. Michel is the current president. Present were Les Amis secretary-treasurer Judge Pamela Ferolino and director Marlinda Yap. All efforts are being made to establish l'Alliance Française de Cebu.

An informal party for a small group of friends followed at The Connection restaurant in Banilad. Executive chef Herman Heinrich prepared an impromptu menu. The ambassador sat next to Wit Council president Bella Garcia and wife Marguerite Lhuillier who was more beautiful than ever.

Next day, Feb. 14, the ambassador visited Casa Gorordo, which was built in the 1880s and is now a showcase of the rich lifestyle under the aegis of the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (RAFI). On hand to welcome him were the foundation's president Roberto Aboitiz and his wife Ma. Cristina Cabarrus de Aboitiz.

Jocelyn Gorra, who heads RAFI's Heritage Programs, personally toured the ambassador and his party. In the group was architect Augusto "Bot" Villalon for whom Casa Gorordo is "home." Bot did the restoration of the house more than 25 years ago, as well as its owners thorough upkeep. He is working on a project with the French Ministry of Culture to be based in Cebu. People will be trained for proper historical monument restoration.

Following that was lunch with the Cebu press at Plaza Filipina restaurant. Joel Pesado made sure the house specialties were served. The table was strewn with more than 1,000 red rose petals. The ambassador said he loves Filipino food and mentioned some of his favorites.

Next activity was a helicopter ride to dedicate a municipal dock than 100 km south of Cebu City in the eastern coast. It has a beautiful Spanish church whose floor plan is exactly that of Basilica del Santo Niño. Restoration is ongoing.

To culminate Valentine's Day there was **dinner for Ambassador Borja de Mozota** at the new home of Michel and Armelita Lhuillier in Maria Luisa Estate Park. Miss Saul organized the decorations garden but more it closely to reveal an astounding view of Cebu's lights.

FRENCH Ambassador Thierry Borja de Mozota, Armelita Llamas Lhuillier, Honorary Consul of France in the Visayas Michel Lhuillier, and the French Embassy's press attaché Carolle Lucas.

SISTERS Marguerite Lhuillier and Angie L. Medina

Tablemare by Monique

Setting was the formal dining room with a massive antique wooden table for 12, decorated with white lilies and roses, scented candles and heirloom silver. Amparito pointed out that she was using, for the first time, the fine goblets and porcelain designed by daughter Monique for Royal Doulton. They were her initials, too. Napkin holders forming flowers or dragonflies in crystal beads had the signature of daughter-in-law Johanna Moreland-Smith Lhuillier.

Ambassador Borja de Mozota sat at the head of the table, with Governor Gwen Garcia at one side, and Amparito on the other. Michel presided the other end, flanked by Carolle Lucas and Marian Aboitiz. The rest of the "diamonte pressure" were the following:

Netherlands Honorary Consul Shirley Aboitiz, UK Honorary Consul Moya Jackson with Mr. Antony Jackson, Lucas Thevenin and his wife Jacquelyn, a stunning beauty. When she unveiled as Miss Zhangli La Madrid, she was often asked to model for ad photos of the hotel. Marguerite Lhuillier later caught up with the group, and charmed all.

Chef Rober Lilja of The Gourmian prepared a great menu. The starter was aptly called "Lavallon Salad." It had organic garden greens grown at the Lhuillier home in north Cebu, with salmon tartare and hearts of artichoke on mini fork pieces.

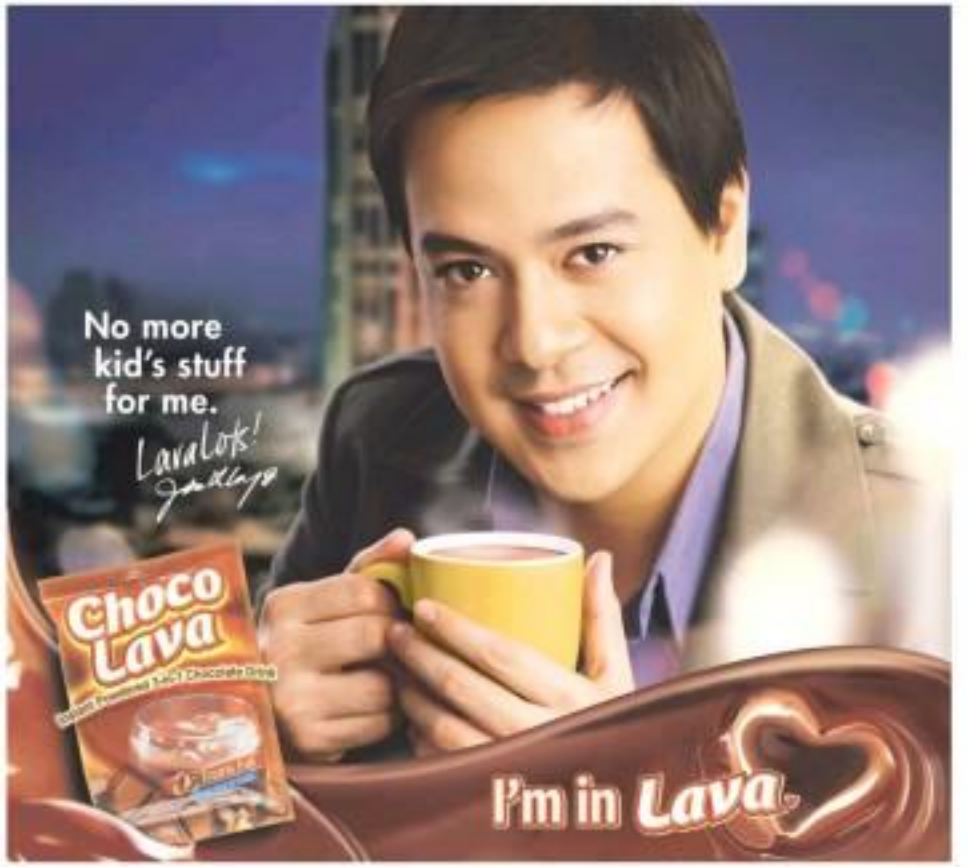
The tomato soup was flavored with orange mint cress. A sorbet of watermelon, cantaloupe, and honeydew with a dash of port wine drew even more "ohs" and "ahs." Main course was a medallion of the tenderest beef ever topped by juicy shrimp. Varied sauces came on the dessert plate.

Michel Lhuillier, like his late parents Henry and Angelita Lhuillier, keeps one of the finest wine cellars in the land. French came the Dom Perignon champagne served as welcome drink, as well as the exquisite white and red wines poured during the meal. The ambassador and Concessaire at the end of the evening were perfect, even after about 30 years in service. Perhaps even better than ever.

Before he left, Ambassador Borja de Mozota thanked his hosts and their guests for a wonderful evening and stay in Cebu. He ventured a few phrases in Filipino and promised to learn some Cebuano for his next visit. "I have 10 minute, there is no more to see, to do, and to enjoy," he said.

How about March 12? That's day night La Chaine des Rotisseurs will hold a gala induction dinner at The Marquee of the Shangri-La in Mactan. Michel and Amparito will preside and welcome 36 new members into Cebu's La Chaine.

They have tasted and approved a menu of French classic cuisine devised by the resort's Executive Chef Emmanuel Dubois. It is French and has eaten wine in the province. Michelin gourmet swings. There are only 300 seats available and reservations have been brisk. Shangri-La Mactan Cbd Raymond Bragg says it will be an unforgettable experience. It's which we say "Oui, oui."



Physicians for Peace Philippines visits Bicol and Zamboanga

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Barcenas

DR. JUAN MONTERO, founder of Physicians for Peace Philippines (PFP), describes healing the sick as a "continuing challenge," especially in being able to put a smile on the faces of patients. The economic crisis happening all over the world doesn't stop this good doctor and his team of volunteers in coming back from Armenia once a year to the Philippines to give free surgeries, stitch prosthesis to amputees, do cataract operations and give free dental care.

Our assistance this showed they are doing the right thing was when Dr. Ted Herbosa, PFP president, was urged during the medical mission at a Bicol hospital two weeks ago. A mother holding a child scalded in lava and showed her child saying "Doc, salamat po. Maguwalo na ang anak ko." In a doll operation three years ago at the Pueblo de Iriga Lone District Hospital in Camarines Sur, Dr. Herbosa operated on Sib child.

Last Feb. 4-6, the PFP, in cooperation with the Philippine-American Physicians Association headed by Dr. Tony Alberg and the Bicol Medical University doctors, held medical missions in Naga, Tigaon and Iriga in Bicol and Iloilo, Virginia brought eight members of the dental team.

According to Lynn Abaad, executive director of PFP Philippines, there were 800 other surgeries and 26 major surgeries in Surgery in Tigaon, Camarines Sur, there were 642 dental extractions, 101 dental prosthetic and resins prosthetic installations for amputees guided by Dr. Josephine Bautista of the Philippine General Hospital Prosthesis Center.

There who assisted were Jennifer Wong of San Fernando and Ambassador Wenny Belmonte, Edelle Jasmen and Edgar Belmonte. There were 700 eye check-ups on adults and children who were given free eyeglasses.

Thanks to the Rotary Clubs of Bicolandia and Legaspi for gathering both children and adults so they could benefit in the medical missions.

Dipolog and Dapitan

I caught up with the health care mission that took place in Dipolog and Dapitan, Zamboanga del Norte, on Feb. 9-12, through the kindness of Dolloy Empenadolaco who lifted me at the Montessa Pension along Jimenez Boulevard. The PFP came upon the invitation of Congressman Benny Labaran who was informed by Vice Admiral Jacinto Ancheta of the need to hold a medical mission in Dapitan. Zamboanga Gov. Rolando "Mike" Yebes personally invited the PFP to render service at the newly built Jimenez Medical Center in Dipolog.

Drs. Martinez, Arthur Platon, Lorbe Bonifacio and Michelle Ramirez did surgeries in both places. Ophthalmologists Lyndon Ong and Rolando Silvestre did 12 cataract operations.

Seeing Clearly progress

In partnership with Lions International, PFP implemented the Seeing Clearly Program where they did eye check-ups on both adults and children. It was symbolic that the check-up took place at the Museum building of the Rizal Shrine considering that Jose Rizal was an eye doctor. Dr. Chris Daniel and Dr. Amy Cuevas checked on the adults, while Dr. Jovi Tampoong took care of the children.

Dr. Chita Gutierrez, chief of staff at Jimenez Medical Center, told me that the hospital is very grateful for the help of the volunteer doctors. Congressman Orly Jaraldo Cremen assured Dr. Montero that the Jose Rizal Memorial Hospital will be greatly improved by the first PFP visit in February, 2010.

Zampen exhibit

The regional office of the Department of Tourism in Western Mindanao has been moved to Dapitan with John Rildolfo Aderianto as regional director. Tourism officer in charge is Rodrendan Pardes, while Ilocos Hernie is supervising tourism operations officer.

Bimbi Abad, tourist tourism officer, told me about the forthcoming "Zamboanga Peninsula" (Zampen) exhibit at the Glorietta Pavilion in Ayala Center on May 4-10. Destinations, arts, crafts, music and cuisine of the three provinces will be promoted, namely: Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga Sibugay.

Also involved are Dapitan, Dipolog, Zamboanga City, Pagadian and Isabela. The rich cultures of Muslims, Subanens and Christians will be displayed in exhibit and shows.

Sunset boulevard

What amazes visitors to Dapitan is Jimenez Boulevard which is facing the South China Sea. Along it are pension houses and restaurants like Famous, Rikudo's and Rosemont. With Manfred Sandro Silvilaga, I was able to appreciate the peace and quiet of the place. The new Shoda Mall, a project of Mayor Jess Jaraldo, is a very attractive place with its restaurants and coffee shops like Classic Cafe.

Tessie Frondoso Asensio and soprano Lissa Amaychew hit a fund-raising concert last Valentine's Day to raise funds for the special children of Dapitan Elementary School. The Rotary Club of Dapitan was the producer. Fashion designer Judith Pabon showed her collection of gowns.

And, of course, there is the beautiful church of St. James the Apostle which was built in 1872. It was repaired and restored by the people of Dapitan themselves and dedicated on July 31, 1967. St. James, whose duty call "Santiago de Matamoros," left us a lesson of the left all his riches. He left us a friend from his untimely progress.

Here in Manila, Jose Miguel Claudio and Mabelcabing made in 23rd year as a national shaker today. All the seven Archangels in 360-day Feast are celebrated at the same time.

Youth workshop

Fr. Richie Santos, CSB wants to invite young writers and artists to a hope workshop on Feb. 28, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, at the Dynamite Office on the 3rd floor, St. John Bosco Parish Compound along Antonio Ave., Pasay City. Call 831-0084 or e-mail bbchelli@yahoo.com. Please bring articles or drawings.

Fr. Zenki Mendiola is inviting readers to a Lenten recollection on Feb. 28 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Marcelli Infant of Theology on E. Rodriguez ave., corner Gilmore ave., Quezon City.

PFP MEDICAL MISSION IN DAPITAN. Zamboanga del Norte congresswoman Cely Jaraldo Cremen (1st district) (4th from right) with Physicians for Peace Philippines volunteers Dr. Arthur Platon, Dr. Rolando Silvestre, Dr. Glen Tampoong, Dr. Lyndon Ong, supporter Dolloy Empenadolaco, Dr. Jose Montero, PFP executive director Lynn Abaad and PFP trustee Jovito Asensio.

DR. JUAN Montero operates on the face Bicol Medical Hospital in Dapitan.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Social-climbing duo upsetting the diplomatic circle

YOU CAN HARDLY MISS THE SOCIAL-MOUNTAINEERING duo in the diplomatic cocktail circuit whose dizzy expansion are now extensively established for having turned gate-crashing into a fine art.

Both are verbally challenged, and share a dress sense that could only be done of "fashion-fused yes."

Kindred Guy recognizes himself by enthusiastic air-chair hunting ground, with the pushy pair turning up invited. [one-of-these managers to get on the guest list by claiming to be in media]

SOCIAL-CLIMBING D4

Polo dispute heats up

With Malaysian and Brunei royal families watching

STORY ON PAGE D4

Sigurado ka ba sa quality ng seasoning mo?

Knorr Real Sarap All-in-one

'Wait lang, ha?'

By Gilda Cordero-Fernando

Staying up late for your 'apo' while he goes prommping is like being a mother again with its dazzlement and frazzlement and exquisite torture

WE HAVE NINE grandchildren from four families—one eventually stands up with topics like that?). Two of their homes are in Antipolo.

When some of the kids got to college in UP in Ateneo, they'd invite their friend for a time in our QC house, or to a condo or dorm owned by their schools. Or they stayed in Antipolo and came home weekdays or on weekends in our house when there was a late-evening affair and no one to take them home.

First it was Monica. The girl, when she was six, could memorize a full-blown story all her own. Now 21, she is a sophomore in Ateneo student of Assumption who describes herself as the creeping architect of the Children's International Summer Village (CISV) here and abroad. Monjohn has to sleep in my bed; many cyberspin friends, to (which) because our spare room's long ago got converted into a "budget" for books.

Believe me, she is a very pretty girl with rosebud lips and naturally curly hair that strips all those lips-glitter. Sometimes, for just-as-pretty sister, Chin-Chin, who is a long-haired, rather demure, quiet person, she sleeps here. When I see them snuggled together, I think to myself, how could we have produced such beautiful creatures? But then, I check myself. Maybe it was the other side, the Americans, who are responsible for that.

Girls are very house guests. They do not flood the bathroom, full off the bed or confuse the towels and the washbrush-er. They pick up their clothes and turn off the lights in a reasonable time.

Grandson

When their cousin, Jr., came, it is an altogether different situation. Jr. is a good-looking, too, his forte is art, but unlike the girls, he loves clothes. He can stay in a small for three hours (leaving me stranded on our lonely wondering for the right shirt or vest or jacket or tie to wear his days with; another night he forgets to text me that he is going to sleep in my bedroom that night. There's a soft knock on my window at 5 a.m. and I open it and there is Jr. shuffling me with a kiss. Like the girls, he is irresistible to a lola like me.

So at 3:05 we are firing up the window bench with food, drink and oh, he has forgotten to take the toothbrush that I gave him last week when he last slept here, and when he skipped over and I had to fetch a spare from grandpa's room and by the way, he needed a T-shirt, too, any old one, oh, but does he have to rub his throat sore by me so that I have to go back and forth, back and forth and by the time I am looking for a new toothbrush and I'm about to give up and go back to bed, and phone, lola, a pair of black socks as via his housemate's pants. And by the way he is sleeping in my room tomorrow again, thanks for telling me!

In minutes dawn but I worry he is not hungry. Just the same I fix him eggs-chicken sandwich and a tray with a cola and a chocolate bar, all of which he wolfs down. Then he begins not to sleep forever and tells me stories.

Once, he did not sleep for 24 hours because he made all by himself, an outdoor stage backdrop that hung two stories high in an atrium building for a school concert. It was so beautiful, everyone said, and I was so proud. I am a sucker for talent.

The next time he comes around is tiring, for I again code my something for the right shirt or vest or jacket or tie to wear his days with; another night he forgets to text me that he is going to sleep in my bedroom that night. There's a soft knock on my window at 5 a.m. and I open it and there is Jr. shuffling me with a kiss. Like the girls, he is irresistible to a lola like me.

Mel also tips in on love to meet a conversation with a girl and how to treat his pesos date. Kris her lightly on the cheek when the party's ended. But Jr. says, I'm too old for her then (19) pounds (may check-check lots on) long? Mel says No, you must make a girl feel good. And you must never let the one to say he's go home on, it's the point, let her (almost) going home.

This time around what he has forgotten is to tell his cousin he needs a corsage to match the girl's gown. And so he tells Wendy who freaks out at the lateness of the date, and by the way, Jr., get her a box of chocolates, too, ha?

Ateneo vs UP 'sorpresa'

But he is the only social animal in the family. Because he is in Ateneo! his brothers and cousins choose, where there is a party going on all the time?

Why is that? I ask Jr. when he is UP it's not the case? Well, he explains, Ateneo is a much smaller school. Everyone is closer to each other because you see your classmates almost. In first Year College there are the basic subjects and the 20 or 30 students meet all the time. If every student celebrated his birthday that would be 35 x 5 or 175 parties a year to go to (without seasonal and it's 1,750). And there's just your classmates. It does not even count the batch mates you get to work with in the orgs. Like, if you join fine orgs that's maybe one more birthday celebration every two weeks or so. And all of these birthdays are held only on weekends, so there are really parties every week—one on Friday and one on Saturday. Plus Ateneo parents are eager to fund all their children's celebrations.

In UP it's not a compulsion to celebrate birthdays. Sometimes their org parties are evening and include older people from all the batches. So you don't get close to everyone. And so the cousins is not like in Ateneo.

Too young

Whatever Miguel, Mel's son, are still too young to go prom-ming. The only thing I will miss when they do is that they will not sleep in my bedroom because they live in our compound. Ming will set under my tap in the middle of the night to tell me that he has bought a pack of frozen chow. Didn't he have enough food in the house? Ming is out of love with cupboard girl friends, or hiding her cellphone?

She probably clipped the article to show off to friends how successful her former boss has become and bragging to them how she had landed him long ago. That could only be a truthful trip for a middle-aged woman. If she had crossed his path and you are positive she is having an affair with him, what will you do about it? Walk her? Eavesdrop? Check her mobile when she's in the bathroom? Don't! Confront her and be done with it.

Phew, that he has been awarded Best Dressed in a debut—information I will treasure. Miguel still can make me up at 2 p.m. to tell me all about the prom and Ming will not expect a trail of used toothpaste in the sink and if I watch a pair of slippers next to Jr.'s room, and by the way, toothbrush, and black socks, too.

But I hope the other generation, Quintin and Franco and Cade and Paolo, when do not live in the compound, will remember to sleep in my bedroom, too. So that I can worry that they left at 4:30 p.m. and it's 5 a.m. and they're not yet home. Did they get into an accident, are they experimenting drugs, are they drinking, did they get into a brawl, did a policeman make them?

I am relieved to finally have the driver on the cell phone sighing, lies he or, pleas, hurry, pat, pa rin sa ilang party. Mid-lang mentanpalan pa rin. Is it okay, he is just attending Tita-mentor he will call he has homework to do homework. Ha father will ground him, maybe two weeks, three weeks, until some other family friend they cannot refuse ends up to ask if their daughter can have him as escort for still another prom date.

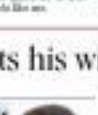
Of course he will sleep in my bedroom on the night of the prom and I won't be able to sleep a wink until he's home. It is almost like being a young mother again with its dazzlement and frazzlement and exquisite torture—interesting and delicious times to revisit in one's sweet years.

He suspects his wife is having an affair with a former suitor

DEAR EMILY,

One day, a newspaper clipping about a successful businessman dropped from my wife's appointment book. When I asked her why she had that clipping, she told the man had proposed to be a supplier of materials for her household business.

In a friendly gathering, the next weekend, when I overheard that my wife had found the supplier, my sister-in-law started talking about the guy—how he had come a long way from being an employee to president of his company. I was surprised at how well she knew this guy—he touched my side before I met her. My wife's face turned red at that moment. She was visibly uncomfortable when I asked.



When someone asked who had seen "Little Children" (where Kate Winslet was having a torrid affair), she stood up and walked away from the group. A topic she gets very animated about is movies. We had seen the movie together and I had expected her to talk about it. I was surprised she didn't. What do you make of this?

I've started to wonder why she hid the guy's identity from me. Was she feeling guilty? Have they started seeing each other and are their meetings not entirely business? Is an affair in the making?

S.D.

Blushing when old boyfriends are mentioned or getting up and going away from conversations is an extra enough to suspect her. Err, what do you really make of this?

Dog be the judge. Her ego began to change much from the time the clipping fell off her hands? Have you noticed her being aloof little things recently, like being in meetings that never happen, or going out sleeping or out of town with supposed girl friends, or hiding her cellphone?

She probably clipped the article to show off to friends how successful her former boss has become and bragging to them how she had landed him long ago. That could only be a truthful trip for a middle-aged woman. If she had crossed his path and you are positive she is having an affair with him, what will you do about it? Walk her? Eavesdrop? Check her mobile when she's in the bathroom? Don't! Confront her and be done with it.

There's nothing so stressful as building a love of somewhere in your head, armed with just a clipping. Shedding clothes and a smile away. A snowball turns into a mountain. Space created that aging. Talk to her.

E-mail the author at emailme@philippinedaily.com.ph. Subscribe! Lifestyle, or send your letters to INQUIRER, *Lop. 20 to www.pdc.com.ph and listen to Ms Marcelo on her the program "Kaibigan Usapan," 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., Mon-day-Friday, on dzBB 1013 FM.*

The Beacon Academy Applications open for Grade 9 SY 2009-2010

The Beacon Academy is an independent, non-profit, co-educational school that will provide a four - year college preparatory program to children of all nationalities at ages 13 - 18. Its curriculum, based on the International Baccalaureate (IB) Academic Programme, will combine the best aspects of the Filipino ethos, and will prepare its graduates for both local and overseas colleges and universities.

The Beacon Academy will provide secondary education of the highest caliber, continuing with the IB World School tradition of the Beacon School (the only school in the Philippines currently authorized to offer both the Primary (PYP) and Middle Years (MYP) Programmes). The Beacon Academy will pursue authorization for the IB MYP for Grades 9 and 10, and for the IB Diploma Programme for Grades 11 and 12. The IB Diploma is a rigorous, academically challenging course of study recognized by colleges and universities around the world.

For the 2009 – 2010 school year the Beacon Academy Grade 9 will be situated on the campus of the Beacon School in Pasong Tamo Extension, Taguig, Metro Manila. In July 2010 the Beacon Academy will transfer to its new and permanent campus. The campus is located in approximately nine hectares of property in Biñan, Laguna (Manilatown Exit), a 30- to 45-minute drive from Makati City.

The Beacon Academy now is taking applications for Grade 9. Parents who are interested in the Beacon Academy are invited to contact the school and arrange an appointment with the Headmaster, Mr. Patrick Ritter.

School Address: The Beacon Academy
c/o the Beacon School, PCPD Building
Pasong Tamo Extension
Taguig, Metro Manila

Phone/Fax: +63 2 846 5048 and +63 2 810 5946

Email: headmaster@beaconschool.ph

Website: www.beaconacademy.ph

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and given designer along with a photo of the couple and a photo of the bridal gown, if any, to the Inquirer, PO. Box 2032 Makati Central Post Office 1260 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A parent of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the readers.

UY-ORTIZ

Rizel Ortiz and **Fred Uy** are tying the knot on March 28 at San Beda-the-Church. A dinner dance reception will follow at Rigodon Ballroom of Peninsula Manila. Rizel will wear a customized angel gown by **Rein Almeda**.

CABATINGAN-YLAYA

Ribelle T. Cabatingan and **Ernesto Cabatingan** of Cavili, Masbate City wed recently **Engr. Rodel D. Ylaya**, daughter of **Anacleto** and **Lucinda Mapue** of Sangley, Cavite City. The couple is based in Cebu, where the bride is with Petron Corporation and the groom is with Holcim Philippines.

REDENCKE-MARAS

Douglas Raymond Redencke and **Sheridan Dizon Maras** exchanged vows on Dec. 30, 2008, at San Sebastian Cathedral, Lipa City.

VICTORIA-CASTILLO

Benjamin Victoria, son of engineer **Leandro** and **Matilda Victoria**, tied the knot with **Aurora Liz Castillo**, daughter of **Aimee** and **Elizabeth Castillo**, on July 5 at the Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus in Villamor Air Base. Aimee wore a strapless ivory duchess satin princess-cut gown encrusted with pearls, crystals and cut-glass beadwork, created by **Jessie** and **Nicky Martinez** of Dakota.

A RECIPE FOR HAVING IT ALL

Happy homemaker Claudine Barretto shares her secret ingredients for a successful home life - a dash of Knorr Real Sarap and lots of love

Claudine Barretto-Santiago is Knorr's Reallista - the woman of today who knows real quality when she sees it. "That's why I choose Knorr Real Sarap," says Claudine. "It's no sikr, real cooking secret!"

She's one of the country's most lovable stars, the face that has launched a number of endorsements. Those who have witnessed her evolved throughout the years as a teen sensation to a self-possessed worldly woman's role probably's a bevy of fans who made such a seamless transition. In yet another graceful transformation, Claudine Barretto has turned herself into a successful and emotionally acclaimed actress and loving homemaker. Her secret? A secret recipe she gladly shares with women everywhere.

Step 1: Start with a delightful brew of family flavors and turn it to your advantage. "She airs a unique blending of talents," says this actress, and in her younger years, she learned a number of Bangs in her mother's kitchen. "We could pitch in with the smaller tasks like beating eggs and pinching chicken meat into strips." Growing up in a large family gave Claudine ample training ground - she learned to love her mother and from her aunt, Glenda Barretto, whose chain of Via Mare restaurants have become an institution of Filipino comfort food.

Step 2: Add a dash of real goodness, liberally. "The nice thing with Knorr Real Sarap is that it enhances the flavor of almost any dish," she says. With a schedule that juggles career and family life, Knorr Real Sarap all-in-one seasoning, with visible flecks of flavorful spices and tangy herbs, allows her to whip up dishes in no time. "It's like a short-cut," she says, "without sacrificing the real flavor of the dish."

Because it's a fine powder mix, the real goodness can creep easily and deeply into any meat, fish, or stew, making cooking entire meals almost a breeze. "It's economical," says Claudine, and both the cost and flavor that it brings to her cooking appeals to her pragmatic side.

"It's a realista," she says. "I'm practical but at the same time I don't like to compromise quality." What she appreciates are ingredients that don't cost an arm and a leg, but do wonders to cooking. Exactly what she finds in Knorr Real Sarap.

Step 3: Pour in a lot of love. The happily married superstar is also a mother to two young kids - her young family is perhaps her most adoring fans club, and for them she brings out the best from her kitchen. She also enjoys cooking for relatives and friends. "I like entertaining and having friends around and feeding them," says the actress. And either you've assured your heart is in it, it's not at all work. In fact, says the actress, "It's extremely fun to cook. It's like taking a creative (risk) world."

Claudine Barretto-Santiago's most challenging role yet - that of a wife, mother, homemaker. "I practice my family above anything else. I make sure I take time out for them and the kids."

"I love cooking for my family!" exclaims Claudine. Her specialty? Adobong Tanggo, made even more flavorful with Knorr Real Sarap.

Of course Claudine Barretto loves a close-knit family. "Ako pinapanood ng mga mahal kong tao kung kumakain," she enthuses.

Claudine Barretto is kindness when it comes to preparing meals for her family. "I make sure I use only quality ingredients. I have to see to it that there it's good quality."

Polo dispute heats up

By Margie C. Enriquez
Contributor

THE MANILA POLO CLUB (MPC) marks its centennial this year—when, ironically, all is not well in polo, and when it could be facing valor issues still to be ironed out about endorsements in history.

The annual draw of its centennial polo, is now the center of controversy involving polo players and the club.

Originally set for today, the Polluza Cup, sponsored by the Polluza Social Family of Malaysia and arguably the most lavish sponsored cup of the season, has been canceled. Nevertheless, Crown Prince Abdullah and his entourage of 30 arrived last Friday to honor social commitments this weekend. There are plans to hold a practice game with the Crown Prince today at the club.

According to former international polo player Gregorio "Gregge" Jacinto III, who represents Malaysia's royal family, Polluza's withdrew the sponsorship because its players' lineup wasn't optimal. Traditionally, the sponsors' lineup is followed.

Years lineups

As are seven last bonding the dispute concerns what some say are frequent, last-minute changes in team lineups by the club representative led by Paulo Gabriel "Donell" Sykes Santos and polo patron Albert "Bobby" Aguirre.

Polo stalwarts have also questioned the polo committee's competence since, they say, impartiality, except for local officials, lack experience in the game.

They also decry the lack of communication between the polo committee and the players.

It has been the custom for sponsors to make the lineup of players. A game sponsorship easily costs half a million pesos.

Tension started in recent last year when the polo committee would change the lineup. Again, other players noted, would urge the inclusion of his son Cole and Gus. These players argued that more senior players had to be given priority.

Last December the polo committee said it would form the lineup of opposing teams, while the sponsor formed the other team. This decision did not sit well with the players. Another added that the committee never brought in sponsors or foreign players to help improve the game.

Just before the Enrique Zobel Cup, polo patron Hugo Zobel struck an agreement with Aguirre that as a sponsor, Zobel would make the lineup. However, the committee interfered with Zobel's list at the last minute. "They don't keep their word," said Zobel.

Mediator

He asked Antonio to mediate with the MPC board. Antonio explained to MPC president Eulalio Rimando that if sponsors were not given the authority to make the lineup, they would back out. Hence, Dimacali agreed that sponsors could—for as long as the game included five MPC players.

Last Monday, Rimando apparently changed his mind and said he was siding with the polo committee, which decided that the sponsor would make the lineup at one team, and MPC, the other.

Meanwhile, the royal Polluza family had given its lineup—the first team of the Crown Prince, two Malaysian polo players and Zobel. The other team would have Brunei's Prince Jefri Bolkiah, Alfonso Aguirre and Anthony Villareal.

With the MPC president's decision favoring the polo committee instead of the sponsors, Antonio decided to back out. He didn't want to cause further embarrassment for the Polluza royal family. They had already sent invitations to the Cup and now had to inform their guests of the cancellation. In the past, the royal family would fly in as many as 100 guests.

Holding simultaneous games has also been another cause of friction. Last January, Hugo told the MPC that the polo field was already ripped up and needed repair. He suggested moving some games to the Cabuyao polo field. However, the MPC did not heed his suggestion.

But last Sunday, Hugo nonetheless held the Jacobo Zobel Cup at Alabang Country Club since there was only the Aguirre Gold Cup in the nearby Las Tunnases Field in BF Pamplona. The Jacobo Zobel Cup had top players Mark Field and two top-ranking gamers, Prince Jefri Bolkiah and Harold Link, owner of Hacienda Polo Field in Thailand. Ricky Subur, the highest-ranking Filipino polo player of this generation, was also seen in the lineup.

There were plans of dialogue between Zobel and Aguirre's camps with the help of retired players, but none pushed through. In the meantime, the sponsors would make the lineup at one team, and MPC, the other.

Social-climbing duo upsetting . . .

From page B1

but recently, it is suspected, unraveled.

They first threatens to hit some style and kissing every guest in sight in a spectacle that has now become so embarrassing that many diplomats make a hasty retreat when they see the two coming approaching.

Their well-rehearsed party trick is to cuddle up any unfortunate or VIP they perceive as the nearest photographer to take their picture. They then try to get their photos published.

The two women have become such a deterrent again at diplomatic receptions that their names are being circulated among various embassies, where secretaries are under orders to see if they are on the guest lists. If they are, their names are struck off the list.

At one recent diplomatic function in the Forbes Park residence of an ambassador his wife, ignoring the two women, was overheard to ask in disarray: "What are they doing here?"

But recently the duo's party act has plumbed new depths. One has been sneaking up to ambassadors and pushing sealed envelopes into their hands with a whisper: "top secret."

When the ambassadors open the envelopes they discover in alarm notes containing recipes and nearly unobtainable photographs of various members of the Gawadan Corps. Supremely ironic this, considering the widespread impression among the diplomats is that these two women crashed the diplomatic party circuit because of their close friendships with senior officials.

At least six ambassadors have alluded to the nasty and damaging notes, including one Saudi Shiite cleric who has been nice to these two women.

As one diplomat was told to have rescinded Iqaito diplomatically, given the crying circumstances: "It's the Consular Corps that has indulged these two ladies, and so it's up to them to fix the problem."

Rajo's Barbie

Designer Rajo Laurel spoke of plans, you'll think seemingly easy to Mars, not in this planet. While business in general remains limited in expanding his product line to include Barbie dolls. These will be Rajo Barbie dolls this year.

Laurel has already lost his name—and design expertise—to a range of products, from bed linens to cuisine (Rajo Laurel Kitchen) to "designer burgers" (Bacchanal Burger). Aside from dolls, he will have another home product and jeans line this year.

Ces has moved on

Call it swell-ness, big or positive outlook. Broadcast personality Cesar Ejercito has apparently put behind her kidnapping by the Abu Sayyaf. Looking out on the lush gardens in Greenbelt 5, with the Ayala Museum looming gracefully in the background, Ces likened our visit to a ball invite: "Parehado ma of Sta. Ines." Then around her stood at least seven guests, including two from Malaysia, who were getting intensely what she meant. When they did, they gave a collective chuckle. Ces laughed—a healthy laughter.

Chef David's his and hers menu

The Valentine's Day jam passed yesterday. Fil-Chinese would go out on dates, most also serve. Restaurants said fast-food chains were packed. Valentine menus and romance was out of kinds of creative and entrepreneurial best.

The menu of Sovereign chef David Pedro de Ayala for Verbena at Discovery Country Square in Tagaytay was different. The Valentine set menu was for two, but instead of Him or Her, not in this planet. While business in general remains limited, Lionel is expanding his product line to include Barbie dolls. These will be Rajo Barbie dolls this year.

Lionel has already lost his name—and design expertise—to a range of products, from bed linens to cuisine (Rajo Laurel Kitchen) to "designer burgers" (Bacchanal Burger). Aside from dolls, he will have another home product and jeans line this year.

Ces has moved on

Call it swell-ness, big or positive outlook. Broadcast personality Cesar Ejercito has apparently put behind her kidnapping by the Abu Sayyaf. Looking out on the lush gardens in Greenbelt 5, with the Ayala Museum looming gracefully in the background, Ces likened our visit to a ball invite: "Parehado ma of Sta. Ines." Then around her stood at least seven guests, including two from Malaysia, who were getting intensely what she meant. When they did, they gave a collective chuckle. Ces laughed—a healthy laughter.

Chef David's his and hers menu

Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

Luxury cruises aren't just for retirees anymore

All aboard a royal ride

CAPTAIN Carlos Federici from Mar del Plata, Argentina

Text and photos by Gibbs Cadiz

A ROCK-CLIMBING WALL aboard a cruise ship? How about an ice-skating rink? A basketball court? A boxing ring? Even a FlowRider, for surfboarding enthusiasts?

If Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. would have its way, these amenities would become just another attraction tied shoulder for-ropes on top of the usual unexpected offerings of a luxury liner.

"Cruising is not just for old people, contrary to common perception," says Allan Bobby Reeves, senior director of Royal Caribbean Legend of the Seas, which is currently plying Asian waters on trips of three to five nights to longer ones of 10 nights.

"We're breaking the mold and pushing boundaries because we want to attract young people to go cruising. They'll discover it's a lot of fun and a great way to have a good time.

"Star Cruises has been in Asia all these years," he adds. "We'd like to offer something different—an alternative experience. We want to be known as the most innovative cruise line in the world."

The Legend of the Seas is one of 38 ships owned by Royal Caribbean. The company is one of the world's largest cruise operators, with a passenger capacity of around 78,600 and itineraries reaching to some 400 destinations around the globe, from Alaska to Australia, Scandinavia, South America, Europe and the Middle East.

In Asia, Royal Caribbean has its own hubs in Singapore. A typical three- to five-night cruise would take passengers to Penang, Langkawi and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, and Phuket in Thailand, a 14-day trip-cover more stops, among them Sihanoukville in Cambodia, Ho Chi Minh and Danang in Vietnam; and Hong Kong, Xiamen and Shanghai in China.

There's also a five-night cruise around the South Korean peninsula, touching on Busan and Jeju in South Korea and Fukuoka in Japan.

Destination

"Cruising is different from other leisure activities because the ship is a destination in itself," says Reeves.

The Legend of the Seas, for example, not even the biggest in its class, represents luxury and style on the high seas with its teak-appointed suites, gleaming marble staircases, Art Deco-inspired lounges and open-view, glass-canopied and roofless carpeted decking. The cuisine is international, so is the crew of

ALL AROUND EU

COLLEEN Sandoy, from Bicutan, Rizal, has worked for five years now as a food server aboard Royal Caribbean ships.

STATEROOM with balcony

DEBENHAMS
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Debenhams is in full bloom this Spring, offering fantastic new collections for men, women, children and the home. Shop for a minimum single-receipt purchase of P3,000 and get a chance to win gift vouchers and other special prizes instantly.
So let your shopping experience bloom at Debenhams!

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Tel. Nos. 901-5650 / 901-5651

See merchandise specials for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0812 Valid as of 2009

All aboard a royal ride

From page E1

nearly 900 people from 68 countries (about 15 percent of them Filipinos).

The passenger profile is, more often than not, dire global. In the Shanghai cruises, for instance, only 30 percent are Chinese—usually whole families—while the rest come from other countries, says Brown.

They come onboard in supernovas a mini-metropolis of facilities, amenities and entertainment options, all packed within 11 decks of the ship and designed for maximum rest and recreation: a casino, mini-golf course, gym and spa, outdoor and indoor swimming pools with jacuzzi, library, kiddie playground, medical center, bars and restaurants, cinemas, a Las Vegas-style theater, duty-free shops, even an art gallery that holds auctions.

And, yes, a rock-climbing wall and a basketball court, though not the Pistolidae and ice-skating rink, which are present in a bigger class of ships. Royal Caribbean claims the rock-climbing wall, which allows one to enjoy the scenic breeze from 30 feet above deck, is relevant unique to its vessels.

everything—the rooms, the temperatures, the bathrooms, even the fingernails of our crew."

Depending on the season and the stateroom selected, a typical three-night "Best of Malaysia" cruise (Singapore-Penang-Kuala Lumpur-Singapore) aboard the Legend of the Seas will set back travellers by $299-$649. That can rise to about $1699-$1999 for a 14-night cruise all the way to Shanghai in China, with eight other ports of call along the way with overnight stays in places such as Hong Kong and Bangkok.

Gargantuan

The Legend of the Seas—867-feet-long and 103-feet-wide...can host 2,076 guests and crew of 726. There are 11 passenger elevators and 902 staterooms, all of which are outfitted with private bath, phone, televisions, mini-bar and individually controlled air conditioning.

The gargantuan nature of the ship's operation can be gleaned from its food requirements. A dozen to four-day cruise, says H&R manager John Herrott, entails 900 cases of beer, 450 gallons of ice cream, 4,522 pounds of bananas, 11,798 pounds of potatoes, 12,080 pounds of flour, 11,628 pounds of meat, 678 cases of soda, 8,480 pounds of cheese, 8,000 pounds of watermelon, 4,925 bottles of wine, 9,500 individual milk cartons, 4,200 pounds of chicken, 600 pounds of lobster, 15,000 pounds of bread and 20,160 eggs.

Those numbers to soon 46,746 meals served ordered—with a special screen to Asian cuisine now that the ship is going around Asia. Most foodstuff are brought in packed and frozen after inspection and certification by the company's Miami office.

Stenson says the ship has received a clean bill of health from the US Public Health Service—a 100 percent rating, which is "quite a rare achievement, because those guys check

Fly with full butler service

By Anna A. Jamboro

Etihad Airways of UAE breaks out of the pack with 'Inspired Service'

IMAGINE THE LUXURY OF having your very own butler/concierge while flying 40,000 feet above. And with it is never and a kitchen service, in-flight guests not only choose what they want but also when they want to.

Etihad Airways, the national carrier of the United Arab Emirates, makes sure every journey is a memorable experience through its unique premium service dubbed "Inspired Service."

From an Etihad Chauffeur, the door-to-door limousine service transporting guests to the airport, to one of the largest onboard personal video screens at 23 inches, Etihad Airways extends the warm Arabic hospitality to its entire clientele.

"We may grow to become a big [player] on the industry but we don't want to be just one among many. The most important thing for us are the passengers. They are at the heart of our service," said Jean Torres, Etihad Philippines country manager.

The only airline with a fully flat bed flying out of Manila, Etihad Airways' "Inspired Service" also includes a personal concierge upon arrival at Abu Dhabi International Airport, who will take care of your baggage and guide you in an exclusive check-in counter.

In the lounge, rejuvenating services such as day-spa treatments, individual film screenings and fine dining cuisine are offered. Once aboard, the ambiance mood lighting instantly puts the airline a class apart from the rest. With an extensive selection of beverages and an extensive F&B menu, the in-flight butler service is more intimate and memorable with someone offering expert advice to you go through your meal choices.

"It's not about big buffet settings with lots of garnishing, like the typical Arabic buffet with lots of sweets and rice. The menu is gentle," reasoned Torres with Asian influences, so for a light snack, you'll probably have popcorn with dried

"THE CUSTOMER is at the heart of our service," said Jean Torres, Etihad Philippines country manager.

"YOU DON'T eat when the airline tells you to eat. You dine on request," said Evan E. Walden, F&B manager, Etihad Airways.

CHICKEN tacos with scrambled eggs, steamed rice and asparagus served on a special china, not tray

seaweed. Or a meal of a single, simple protein with light vegetables," said Evan E. Walden, F&B manager of Etihad Airways.

One of the best part, said Walden, is dining on request. On a red-eye flight, for instance, where most passengers have already had dinner prior to boarding, you can choose to simply have your warm olives with mint before turning in bed, or go straight to sleep and request for breakfast at a certain hour.

Meals are served on plates, not trays, and if you are traveling first class, you get the comfort of a full dining table. Except for countries with restrictions, such as Australia, Etihad doesn't use plastic cutlery. The china is specially designed, with a lovely table linen and quality glassware to match.

"It's certainly a big challenge because we are offering fine-wine dining experience aboard an aircraft. It's almost like controlled turbulence, but the crew is well-trained," Walden said.

Long-haul flights are even more awaited now with the fully flat bed in hand-sewn linen extending from 6'1" (business class) to 6'6" (first class). Ergonomically designed seats give you even a feel of personal space. The flight has a built-in massage facility, a unique 180-degree window features for onboard business meetings or private dinners, and a privacy shell for first class.

Since its first flight five years ago, Etihad Airways is now among the fastest growing airline companies in the industry, last year alone making a 34 percent leap in passenger numbers. From Manila, it flies daily to Abu Dhabi, and takes off to 50 destinations in the world from there. For more information, visit www.etihadairways.com.

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — **BIRTHDAY**

ACROSS
1 Sushi bar
5 Early North Dame freshman
10 Pitcher Hershiser
14 Chalk dust
15 Pack for the night
16 Fish eggs
17 Gas station sign
18 Cut a corner
19 Sweet potato
20 Tree of Norwegian
21 Low-down act
23 Journal for "Spin"
24 Sunday paper part
25 Dirt, dirt, more dirt
28 Remain on hand to put employees back on the payroll?
31 "Dave" actress Hagerty
34 Pack away
36 Reason for
38 Make bright
40 Freeze
41 Hotel complaint (related to Dial?)
42 Drink — at home
43 Bird's nest, in physics
45 Web of lanes
46 — start to (assume a proactive attitude)
49 Drink with fancy umbrella
50 Lyon lunch
51 Ship's record
52 Chile pepper
53 Sandwich shop, for short
54 Tennessee Williams's "— of Roses"
55 Bird's nest, in physics
56 Tiny — (pet)
57 Sunday spot
58 Tiny — (pet)
59 Cavalry sergeant's activity?
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Cebu International Furniture
& Furnishings Exhibition

March 5 to 8, 2009

Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino
Cebu, Philippines

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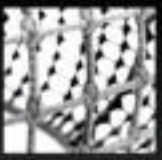

THE DESIGN DESTINATION

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Participating exhibitors are known internationally for being capable of meeting large volume orders while being flexible enough to cater to lower volume orders of niche buyers.

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Make Your Child Shine with the Hong Kong Disneyland Star Guest Program

Loads of Disney's characters and cast members await you at Hong Kong Disneyland!

THIS SUMMER, LET YOUR KIDS SHINE brightly as you treat them to a fabulous holiday celebration for all their hard work! The Hong Kong Disneyland Star Guest Program, starting on March 6 to May 31, 2009, is open to families and gives them a chance to reward their kids with a magical summer experience that they will treasure forever.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS BEGIN WITH A STAR GUEST BADGE

To transform your kid into a Star Guest for the day, simply visit any Hong Kong Disneyland ticket booth at the Park Entrance or City Hall, Main Street USA for a "Star Guest Badge." The designations will elevate their experience and signal the start of a day filled with magical moments.

At every turn, the Disney cast is ready to make your VIP the center of attention, bringing being selected as the day's Grand Marshall leading the "Disney on Parade" and waving to all the guests along the parade route. You'll have the privilege of selecting your favorite colored car at Autopia or becoming an honorary Space Ranger on Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters. The Star Guest Certificate is yours to take home, along with memories to cherish for all time.

Be a star and have fun with Disney cast members

UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES TO LAST A LIFETIME!

For access to more memorable events at Hong Kong Disneyland, be sure to take advantage of the all-new and exclusive Star Experiences.

Use these Star cards and get the full Star Experience at a glance!

Star Pass

Add a "Star Pass" buckle to your Theme Park admission and receive the star treatment, such as priority entrance and special seating privileges at our theater shows. "The Golden Mickeys," "Festival of the Lion King" and "Mickey's PhilharMagic", and selected attractions such as Space Mountain, The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, and Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters!

Make Disney Dreams a reality at your VIP Park

Star Tour

Discover all the delights of Hong Kong Disneyland on a two-hour personalized tour of the Park. The tour is tailor-made specifically for your VIP guest and their family. What's more, this tour comes complete with a private meet-and-greet session with two Disney friends.

Indulge in delicious treats and fine entertainment by the fireworks display

Star Finale

The best way to end your special day is with a special Star Finale experience. You'll be serenaded by the Disney quartet before being dazzled by the spectacular "Disney in the Stars" fireworks display. All while you enjoy delectable hors d'oeuvres, sumptuous desserts and a signature magical star cocktail.

So what are you waiting for? Walk through the magical world of Hong Kong Disneyland and experience a dining holiday with your Star Family! For more information, visit www.hongkongdisneyland.com

Terms and Conditions:
1. The Star Pass, Star Tour and Star Finale are available as an additional purchase on top of regular Park admission ticket prices.
2. Star Guest Badge, Star Pass, Star Tour and Star Finale are subject to availability.
3. Please call 852 1830 830 for booking Star Pass, Star Tour and Star Finale.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Annabelle, Wilma at it again

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE VERBAL TIFF BETWEEN ANNABELLE RAMA AND Wilma Galvante is far from over.

"Wilma bygones n'ya sobs, hankie n'ya" Rama said of GMA 7 as

ANNABELLE | 11

AUTHENTIC mimicry: Sean Penn as Harvey Milk, Frank Langella as Richard Nixon.

Oscar bets– or why Brad Pitt shouldn't win

By Constantine C. Tejero

OVER A DECADE ago, we wrote that the Oscars was a popularity contest, more about Hollywood preoccupations than the art of cinema, film theory or actor's craft. Today, on the eve of the 81st Annual Academy Awards, we still stand by that statement.

We believe the awards should be given by critics, not just anyone who happens to pass by, which most of the 5,000-strong Academy members are.

Strong competition

There certainly is no "Citizen Kane" or "Taksi Story" among this year's nominees for Best Picture, but we can expect at least one to become a classic. We can bet on any one of them: David Hacker's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," Stephen Daldry's "The Reader," Ron Howard's "Frost/Nixon," Gus Van Sant's "Milk," Danny Boyle's "Slumdog Millionaire."

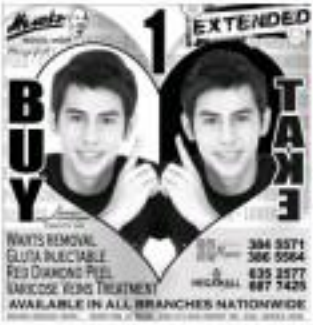
The acting categories seem to be the strongest in contention in years. Often, in the past, the best Actress race was the main event. This year, surprisingly, it's the Best Actor's turn.

Among the contenders, Brad Pitt, in "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" (title role), seems the weakest. His startling scene here, such as those he displayed in previous works like "Thelma & Louise" and, more recently, "Burn After Reading."

Of Pitt's generation, only three or four actors consistently deliver even in crappy movies, among them Johnny Depp and Christian Bale. (We can be a good actor but his performances largely depends on roles's dreaming him).

As Button, he doesn't do much—his facial expression barely changes for nearly three hours.

OSCAR | 11



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CERTIFIED BOX OFFICE HIT!!!

Richard Gutierrez and KC Concepcion

And it all began...

When i met u

"The perfect Valentine Date movie! Richard and KC have amazing chemistry"

"Romance is back on the big screen"

"Sweet, hilarious, and realistically romantic"

"Kiligin at maiinlab ang lahat"

"Richard and KC finally get the romance flick they deserve"

NOW ON ITS SECOND WEEK!

THE 1st BIG-BUDGETED MOVIE OF 2009!

Kristin Kreuk is
CHUN-LI
An undercover Interpol agent, she plans to avenge her father who was murdered by the evil M. Bison.

Special Skills:
Spinning Bird Kick
Hundred Foot Kick
Rising Heaven Kick
Qigong Fist
Qigong Palm

Chris Klein is
Charlie Nash
Charlie is a first lieutenant in the United States Air Force and is given the duty to track down M. Bison and uncover corruption within the American military.

Special Skills:
Sonic Boom
Sonic Break
Somersault Shell
Somersault Kick
Crossfire Blitz

Moon Bloodgood is
MAYA
Beautiful yet deadly, Maya is a tough agent set out to eliminate M. Bison and his organized crime syndicate.

Special Skills:
Electric Arm
Seismic Shock
Fiery Kick
Flash Jump

STREET FIGHTER
THE LEGEND OF CHUN-LI
OPENS FEB.25

THE 1st BIG-BUDGETED MOVIE OF 2009!

Neal McDonough is
M. BISON
A would-be world dictator, Bison's ambition is to control the world's governments through his covert crime syndicate.

Special Skills:
Psycho Crusher
Head Stomp
Scissor Kick
Devil Reverse

Taboo is
VEGA
A masked talon-wielding warrior from Spain who uses a personal fighting style combining Japanese Ninjutsu and Spanish bullfighting.

Special Skills:
Scarlet Terror
Rolling Claw
Rolling Flash
Bloody High Claw
Flying Barcelona Attack

Michael Clarke Duncan is
BALROG
A professional boxer and one of Bison's top 3 henchmen, he is a double agent who has currently infiltrated the ranks of InterPol.

Special Skills:
Buffalo Headbutt
Crazy Buffalo
Gigaton Blow
Wild Smash

STREET FIGHTER
THE LEGEND OF CHUN-LI
OPENS FEB.25

ENTERTAINMENT SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 2009

Annabelle, Wilma at it again

A-page 11

...vice president for Entertainment TV Gilleran, who reportedly are a meeting with Roman's widow, Heart Evangelista, to talk about a new project for the actress, and the legislator consenting her happen weekend.

"Heart did not mean that project on the devil woman (Gabriela) is on," Roma told Inquirer on Wednesday.

Shortly after the meeting, Roma said, Evangelista received a letter from Dick Perez, GMA 7 vice president for legal affairs, "reminding" the actress of the contract she signed with GMA 7.

In the letter dated Feb. 10, a copy of which was sent to Inquirer, Perez said Evangelista had entered because of "signed commitment" two sitcom seasons in her contract with a television supplement. He added that

ENTERTAINMENT B-12

3RD WEEK

"Successfully blends elements of X-MEN and MATRIX while adding its own unique sci-fi flava."

THE BATTLE OF THE SUPER SOLDIERS BEGINS

CHRIS EVANS
PUSH

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 GRAN TORINO PG-13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30
2 CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC PG-13 11:45, 2:20, 4:55, 7:30, 10:00
3 CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC PG-13 1:20, 3:55, 6:30, 9:05
4 HE'S NOT JUST THAT INTO YOU PG-13 1:30, 4:30, 6:40, 9:20
VALKYRIE PG-13 1:30, 4:00
VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA R-18 6:55, 9:10

Shang presents WCCK's Xiao ng Shang at the Grand Atrium, 3rd pm

Adult 18 - UP Ambassador, Malaya, Cine de Joy, Cinelle

Full 21 - New Generation, UA (Greek, Season Knight)

Shangri-La Plaza

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Walter Mart

Oscar bets—or why Brad Pitt shouldn't win

Front page F1

and his body acting? Well, Pitt's heavily made-up face is digitally imposed for the most part on someone else's shoulder.

Yet, one subversive credible voice has declared this a one of the subtlest performances in Pitt's career.

So an authentic arbiter at play, consider the exquisitely calibrated performance of Richard Jenkins in "The Visitor," but especially Frank Langella in "Frost/Nixon." That's subtlety that cannot be faked.

We can see that Mickey Rourke worked really hard on "The Wrestler," even bulking up to fearsome proportions for the role. In any other year, he could vie for sheer good acting, plus effort and sentimental reasons. But, just his luck, he has to contend with Sean Penn this year.

We need to be trained off by Penn's annoying Method, channelling Marlon Brando the way Al Pacino and Robert De Niro used to, but, playing the first openly gay elected official of America in "Milk," Penn totally lost himself in the role. He looks positive, talks and mimics his very nominal Jay Hall with a "straightness" that's subtler than Dustin Hoffman's in "Tootsie" or Cliff Robertson's in "Brookfield or Bust."

This Sean reminded his largely alpha male ensemble to such a fine degree that the actors are hardly recognizable, which just shows his success as director. Consider Emile Hirsch as a gay punk—why wasn't this guy nominated for Best Supporting Actor?

Just as compelling

The Best Actress race is not as contentious, though the performances are just as compelling. In the under-seen "Frozen River," Melissa Leo is a matriarch torn struggle of business across the border of Canada and the United States. In the oddball "Rachel Getting Married," Anne Hathaway proves she can act and look just as desperate and edgy as Winona Ryder—and can practically smell her.

Angelina Jolie has never looked as frail or helpless as in her role of a mother searching for her missing son in "Changeling." This is a jolting performance, as we're used to her strong-woman archetype.

Kate Winslet is haunting and haunted as a former Nazi guard in "The Reader," but her penchant for stripping somewhat diminishes the character. Though her performance here has no peaks, it has steel. Kristin Scott Thomas should have been nominated in "Revolutionary Road," where she's more compelling as a housewife trapped in 1950s American suburbia.

In "Doubt," Meryl Streep, as an iron-fisted nun intrigued on how primal fears and assorted doubts lie the storm of change after Vatican Council II, is more devilish than she was in "The Devil Wears Prada." She had richer phrases of villainy before, but this is the first time the moviegoer would want to sing her cancan chat. Her final breakdown scene is unprecedented thrashing.

Supporting bets

As for best supporting actor, two horses stock for Heath Ledger as the Joker in "The Dark Knight"—he's a good actor, and he's dead. His arm is a foregone conclusion, unless the diehard of Comic comes galloping by. We're inclined to root for Philip Seymour Hoffman for his complex portrayal of the parish priest in "Doubt," but we have to cheer him.

Hoffman adds layers of ambiguity to his characters as the film progresses, his task more almost impossible. In his compulsory confrontation scenes with Streep, she holding the crucifix like a dagger, he holds his own. He should have been nominated for that scene.

The best Supporting Actress category is said to be the closest race this year. Everyone is good, but we're citing the three divas.

Marisa Tomei really worked on her pole-dancing for "The Wrestler," and her chemistry is finely modulated, even when she screams. Penelope Cruz's performance as a mad artist in "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" is at you-to-die as you can get, passionate, intelligent and seeing.

But our bucet goes to Viola Davis as the mother of the allegedly abused boy in "Doubt." It's not that she's the best of the lot but that her performance is committed, in as few minutes that you have time only to hold your breath as she scrubbles.

Yet dominant features Pitt, "BALL-E" is a sure winner. There are also two horses serving in it: it is a revenge movie about dystopia, and allies hope at the age of global warming. It can be enjoyable, but nothing takes away his quirker than a cartoon eating itself seriously.

It is television history. While "I, Rag's (all)" references only "Seven Samurai," and "The Lion King" alludes only to "Hamlet" and "Forbidden Trust," this one movie to have appropriated anything that ever flickered on screen, from the classic to the recent sci-fi. "Modern Times," "Metro on the Bounty," "Dark Nights," "2001: A Space Odyssey," "E.T."

Kid-friendlier

More subtle love to kids in "Bang Pa Pain." This one is more fun viewing, more visually imaginative, more philosophical without ever trying. More importantly, its characters and situations are funnier.

Of the Best Picture nominees, "The Reader" has the prettiest and most distinct scenes—the Holocaust, and the period after that—but, as with other Oakley films, we still think it's soft. And much as we'd like to root for "Frost/Nixon" and "Milk" for turning the most radical period in American history into crackling chamber drama and political thriller, we're aware that they're long shots.

That leaves us with the two films that are commanding neck and neck.

Not Fitzgerald's

"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" is OK, but its fabricated pretentiousness is superficial, its visual tropes obvious. It has stretches of languor (as when the camera lingers on Pitt's face, probably hoping to coach some nuance), that 5 Seem Fitzgerald's short story (at which it was purportedly based does not have, a bit lengthy Oscarpleas.

And it's not the Fitzgerald story at all. They have changed everything except the title and the premise of reverse aging. In fact, every aspect of the plot is different from the original story, from the time span to the characters' names to the relationship dynamics. This is not even an adaptation. In which case, they should have changed the title as well. Mr. suspect they're just using the Fitzgerald cache for publicity.

"Slumdog Millionaire" is an alternately horrifying and rapturous exploration of a world of filth and violence, love and squalor—a fine specimen of the Cinema of Abjection. The story is conventional, even banal, but the film takes an radical form by blending a distortion of the Neo-realist impulse and an exaggeration of the Bollywood melodrama.

The grittiness of slum life is enhanced by the realism camera work, hand-held-ing, manipulative score, wobbling color schemes, so that every other scene looks faded. Suffice it to say that the blended color is more mind-fucking than the dulled color in Scorsese's Best Style exposed in "Transporting."

The Bollywood song and dance routine at the finale is no small way helps make this investigation into lower life forms feel commercial. With that, we the audience are as much transported.

FREIDA Pinto in Lotha in "Slumdog Millionaire."

> 'Slumdog Millionaire' is an alternately horrifying and rapturous exploration of a world of filth and violence, love and squalor—a fine specimen of the Cinema of Abjection.

Major misgivings

We haven't yet seen any of the nominees for the Best Foreign Language Film that found on its being the most popular, "Waltz with Bashir" from Israel, might win, though some believe it should be under the Best Documentary Feature category. (!)

As always with the Oscars, our beef is: vision issues and major misgivings, such as films not nominated when they're clearly a lot better than the nominees. Some who can easily bounce Brad Pitt in a proper competition, for instance, are not even nominated.

Among them are Leonardo DiCaprio in "Revolutionary Road"; Ben Stiegler in "Tilgy"; Bill Irwin in "Rachel Getting Married"; even Jean-Claude Van Damme in "JCVD" (yes, that Van Damme, we kidding).

But we know how popular penny boys are in Hollywood. So, good luck, Mr. Pitt.

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GALLERIA

1 VALKYRIE	6 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
2 GRAN TORINO	7 PINK PANTHER 2
3 VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA	8 SAGWAN
4 HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU	9 UNDERWORLD 3
5 WHEN I MET YOU	10 PUSH

ERMITA

1 GRAN TORINO

2 VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA	6 VALKYRIE
3 HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU	7 PUSH
4 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC	8 SAGWAN
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METRO EAST

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NOVALICHES

1 SAGWAN	4 WHEN I MET YOU
2 VALKYRIE	
3 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC	

PIONEER

1 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC	3 WHEN I MET YOU
2 GRAN TORINO	4 HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU

STA. ROSA

1 VALKYRIE	5 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
2 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC	6 INKHEART
3 INKHEART	7 AUSTRALIA
4 WHEN I MET YOU	8 WHEN I MET YOU

LIPA

1 UNDERWORLD 3	
2 INKHEART	
3 AUSTRALIA	
4 WHEN I MET YOU	

DASMARIÑAS

1 INKHEART	5 THE ABANDONED
2 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC	6 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY
3 WHEN I MET YOU	7 INKHEART
4 THE ABANDONED	8 MILK

IMUS

1 INKHEART	5 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
2 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC	6 YES MAN
3 WHEN I MET YOU	7 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY
4 THE ABANDONED	8 INKHEART

ANGELES

1 INKHEART	3 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
2 WHEN I MET YOU	4 YES MAN

STARMILLS

1 WHEN I MET YOU	4 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY
2 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC	5 INKHEART
3 YES MAN	6 MILK

BACOLOD

1 UNDERWORLD 3	6 PINK PANTHER 2
2 YES MAN	7 SAGWAN
3 PINK PANTHER 2	8 VALKYRIE
4 WHEN I MET YOU	9 UNDERWORLD 3
5 VALKYRIE	10 SAGWAN

ILOILO

1 BRIDE WARS	5 CONFESSIONS of a SHOPAHOLIC
2 MY BLOODY VALENTINE	6 YES MAN
3 WHEN I MET YOU	7 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY
4 UNDERWORLD 3	8 INKHEART

DID YOU KNOW...

From 'X' to R-18

THE MOVIE AND TELE-
vision Review and Clas-
sification Board (MTR-
CB) gave an R-18 rating
to Pedro Sikdaina and
Ellen Ramos' "Walang
Hanggang Paalam" on
23 (word missing).

Board chair Marilen
Laguardia said the
movie's producer sub-
mitted a new version
of the film without the
objectionable scenes.
According to the com-
mittee report, the full-
length scene "was al-
tered" and the episode-
ries "was not shown
anymore."

The film was rated
"X" on its first review.

Producer Lo
Dee-Guiguinto confirmed
that he and the film
makers made the cuts.

Filmmaker Sikdaina
so said, "We didn't
delete the scene, we
just took away a shot.
We asked for 8-15, but
never told that the
theme itself is to in-
cure ... and incest."

Beyond San Diego Pa

Annabelle . . .

From page 11

her refusal was a "th
brands" of the contract.
thrill ... void of legal ramifi
in order to prevent one ter
ers," Perez said.

Perez said she went
Gobrante "threatening"
third. On July 17, Perez
appealed, through a letter
for lawyer, Agnes Maxima
the Rivera Lawyer Mana
Law Offices, saying Rivera
Jolo's endorsement contra
with the issuance suppleme
not set the contract
thumbed down the project
question. "It was because
role would adversely distu
and prejudice [Evangelista
public image and reputatio
the letter stated.

Maxima pointed out th
Evangelista's flagrant contr
only engaging her to work
the show "Sisters," "Sa
Dancing ng Groups," "Sa
and a local adaptation o
Korean series, "MIH. I ha
compiled and/or contracte
terms ... [Evangelista] has c
Now [for the Seventeen
protect. It is our client's
new start (and that GMA
comply with its obligation
said Maxima.

In August last year, Ba
secured 2 decrees of "inhibi
ing" the screening of last
Rabaca. Eastwood's mo
refute the inibition was
proved the staging of
Inhibition is issued if Editor
pute exists. Highly
Dantes and Sharon Rivera,
Reviewer day.

How Kara Dioguardi strikes a chord with AI viewers

LOYAL "AMERICAN IDOL" FANS are now familiar with the fourth judge, Grammy-nominated songwriter Kara DioGuardi. Says "Idol" creator and executive producer Simon Fuller: "Kara is a smart, savvy lady. We knew she would bring a new energy to the show." Following is a revealing exchange with her, courtesy of Zap2it.

How did you land the job?

I'm sure everyone wants to know. My agent called and ... I asked, 'Did you dial the wrong number?' I was like, 'There's no way they're going to ask me. Why are you even listening?' I guess they wanted somebody who was from the industry.

How are you adjusting?

I'm just trying to enjoy it, taking each day as a course, because it's a big change for me. I've basically been in the studio for 15 years, it's a different experience when people know me now.

Has this isn't your first encounter with the show, is it?

I've written a bunch of songs that have been performed and released by "Idol" contestants. I co-wrote "Will Away" with Kelly Clarkson for [season four runner-up] Bo Bice. I've written with and for [season five runner-up] Katharine McPhee and co-wrote "The Way" with Clay Aiken. I also have a song ("To Be With You") on David Archuleta's new CD.

Taste Five

What are you bringing to the show?

I love my own take on things. I'm bringing a unique perspective to the show since I was a singer and now I write, produce and sign talent. Like Simon, I'm very involved in the day-to-day business of the industry. I'm also very opinionated and not afraid of a good confrontation.

What are your thoughts on Paula as a judge?

Paula brings a lot [to the show]. She's told many records, she's performed, she's been here and it is to be an artist. She treats the contestants [kindly] and knows that their dream is a marathon. She cares about them. She's encouraging, kind, nurturing. Every person needs reinforcement.

And Randy?

When Randy speaks to the contestants, he's coming from a very knowledgeable place. He is a great musician and he's been out on the road, he knows when a singer is in a comfort zone. He has a way of being honest, but in the most true helpful...

How nasty is Simon?

He calls it like he sees it. I like that about him, and respect him for it. He's very honest. And funny.

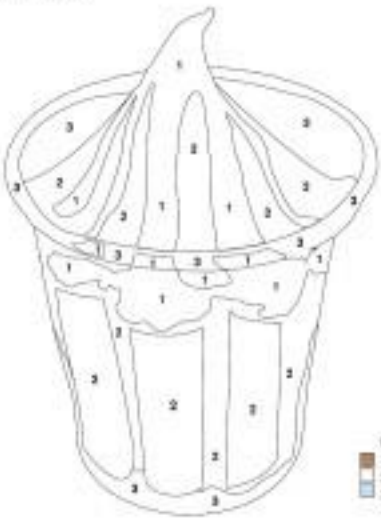
What are you looking for as a judge?

I'm looking for someone who has a unique look, a great voice, a unique style, someone who's got something somebody else. They have a love (incredible self-confidence, because anybody who has

MORE ON...

Color By Numbers!

Color the Sundae by following the number code.
Be sure to stay within the lines.



Number Code:
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2 - White
3 - Light Blue

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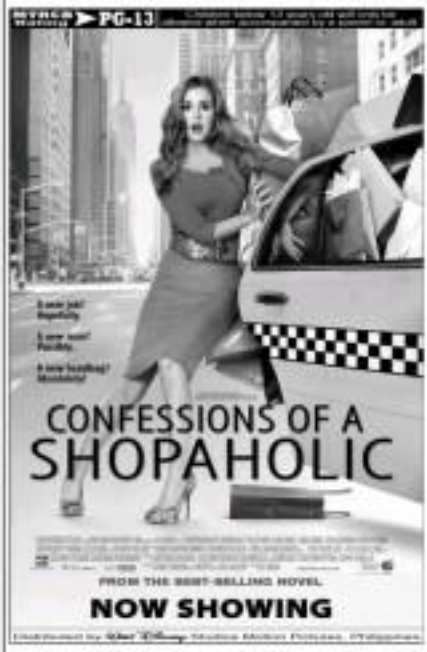
How Kara Dioguardi ...

over make it stop—cuts that stage and sweat is from the amount they oppose (it's [she] impatient that they're themselves and that they're interesting enough to keep me engaged.

What is a good performance?

A great performer doesn't care what anyone thinks. He trusts himself to the moment, he's authentic, believable and follows his heart. When you watch an amazing performer, you feel what they're putting out there; it almost becomes your own experience. That's what I hope that we find this season—we don't think there'll mind be or she should be doing rock music in order to any kind of score, but the performer will be great to just being himself or herself.

"American Idol" airs on Wednesday and Thursday at 8 p.m. every Wednesday and Thursday at 8 p.m.



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Trouble, part 2, for manager and top TV exec

Nose-pair 99

Richard Gutierrez (ano ang figure. (Asawa ou ha?)

•Kris Aquino may oras na para kay James Yap. (Ano na nga ba, wala daw.)

•Marvin Agustin may bagong gf pero hindi raw si Julius Magdangal. (Dere-re pa rgeds.)

•Karylle nakikinig ng balitang si Christian Bautista. (Time to re-enact "West Side Story.")

No-no-no

•Octavio Trillo-Heart Evangelista late reuse. (PHOTO NG PYRIMIS, ha?)

•Heart hawal mahaba di pending maging nanay (Gaya pmanay ang lave nyan?)

•Talot lesan si Ogie Alcasid, Regine Velasquez na parenog. (Parang hindi na man.)

Have you say it?

•Sam Milby walking na madungis kay Jennifer Bautista. (Indie fashion awareness.)

•50 ni Ara Mina d daw ganap sina Pole Ravales at Jennet Ybana. (Their ex other consideration.)

•Sabi ni Paulita Gomez nagsasalita na si aliwan. (Talaga? Lolas ngba?)

•OK kay Bianca Rodriguez ang dating nasi. (Candid nman yan with bra.)

•Pede Pawanal marinig yon ang kanyang sa balita. (Ah feeling balun.)

•Kim Chui pelabet sa balita. (Pelabet na ba "pon?)

•Aktor, Cartio nakipagbalikan sa ha? (At least, tinati to Greenwich.)

•JC de Vera, klipas na 4th, ipa partner daw kay Judy Ann Santos. (Ah, sya Jo Yon)...)

•Bale na raw leaving Interiors si ABS-CBN, Claudine Barretto klipas na sa (2014.?? (Long dhot nga ito.)

•Lone walang pabo sa ex gf. (Is he spa.)

•Ina Alonzo doks malasdoktor kay Sarah Geronimo. (Wag lang niyang cabalinga

ORAL HEALTH

Hiki Gi, Billy Crawford and Sam Concepcion attended Colgate's celebration of Oral Health Month at SM Mall of Asia recently. They're supporting the toothpaste brand's Zero Cavity Mission for young and old alike.

sa kanachan, she'll be OK.)

•Ano Mina statement se Cristine Reyes? (Same se-ot?)

•Hindi ng seselyan, magpaalo sa ang bahay ... Alma Moreno magpalooat in ang mayor sa Hindanan. (Mayor sa taxi?)

•Bale Mar Jalayssee na nga ba ang show biz? (Not likely. Not likely. Have we said not likely?)

—Annabelle Rama sobyet ta kay Wilma Galvante. (Again!)

(Bandera, Pamhok)
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Connect The Dots!

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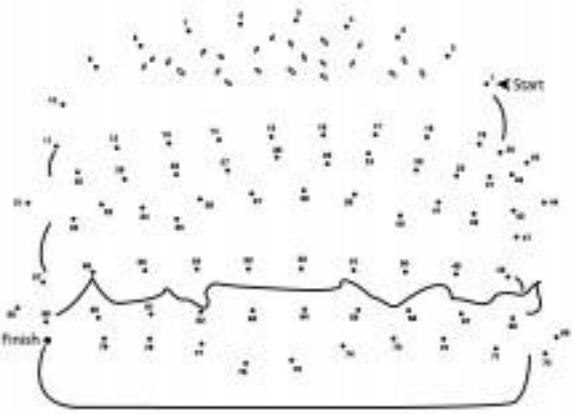

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Trouble, part 2, for manager and top TV exec

By Our Entertainment staff

IS THERE TROUBLE brewing again—for the nth time—between Betty Manager and Network Executive?

FHM's intrigue, Cave Idol, is said to be on the verge of moving to another channel. FM blames NE for the slow pace of CE's career. A source says FM is wondering...and not quietly at all—why Aga, Betty's former is getting all the breaks.

Is it because AA is NE's favorite? FM demands an answer.

Mystery guy

We got an e-mail about Young Director with a secret. ID is convenient for aspiring, beautiful ladies. But YD allegedly goes abroad whenever he gets an urge to indulge his real passion ... for headbanger Bands.

Shake, Lotharia YD is a closet gay? A close bi? Undies or who received the same e-mail, confirmed YD's identity-crisis.

Rocker's false notes

Finky Rocker serenaded Penny Gal with a song that he said he composed especially for her. But PG found out that the song was pow, mostly used as theme for a TV show aired long before they met. This could be one of the reasons that PG and PG's affair went pfft.

Fearless no more

Fiery Comic was earlier rumored to be the girlfriend of Married Mismatch. But FC is now coming into her own, with a slew of choice projects away from MH's shadow.

But when FC was confronted by the press about MH's ownership significance in her life, FC's fearless-ness disappeared. Was the fear gone, she sweetly responded: Impossible. FC got younger-eyed.

Something fishy

Not even Jamz and Intrigue can mask the stink of ownership—hahaha...for Entertainment!

SHARA: Overcome back as Lolita.

Celebrity Someone who had the misfortune of chatting with CE up close insists CE's breath smells fishy. Just like the answers of CE's scruples?

Take 2 for Laida

Sarah reprises the role of Laida in "You Changed My Life," sequel to "A Very Special Love," opposite John Lloyd Cruz's Miggy.

Laida cast a spell on local audiences with her sex dance in the 2008 runaway hit movie. Sarah is one of Joel Ilbert's top screeners, and the final chain is fully support-ing "You Changed My Life," which opens nationwide on Wednesday. Initial dispatches about the movie has been coming from the JollibeeMachinery.

Up, up and away

Snowbunnies Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo were celebrity guests at the 14th Philippine Snowsational Ice Ay Balloon Fiesta at the Clark Freeport Zone recently. The couple gamely jumped onto the Yellow Cab Pizza Co. balloon manned by Hungarian Captain Gyula Andaki for the Night Glow exhibition.

Living like a nun

Claw, at 62, kicks off the second phase of her concerts at Cuenco Palace in Lay Negan this month. She told the Associated Press in an interview why she's quiet in the daytime: "I didn't anticipate the dresses getting to me (least the way it did ..... So when I'm Lit Signal, I have to kind of 'live like a nun and not talk during the day."

All for Nixon

RP film critic David Germade, on his bet for Outst Best Actor:

"I never thought I'd say it, but I'm rooting for Nixon. Yes, Bean Penn is emotionally deserving as another killer. "Tis political leader. His Harvey Milk is so gaudily the sentimental character Penn has created (save for party circle Spicoli in "Fast Times at Ridgemont High"). And Penn very well might walk away with his second Oscar.

RUSHES SUNDAY

Bit Frank Langella has crafted a monumental performance as Richard Nixon, a role he manages without a trace of caricature. His Nixon is everything you imagine the man was—brilliant, bumbling, unscrupulous, neurotic, scuffed, ravishing."

* * *

Top of the tabloids

The top show biz stories in local tabloids this week. (And why we are stunned, if we are stunned.)

Never ending story

•Jennylyn Mercado seeks ga rin ng kili-ang Andrewnakan. (Eeeek, such a cuppled it!)

•Jennylyn compares si Albina Stanford? (Sister, kailan ni pagsasama?)

•Wala akong kinalaman sa Jennylyn—Patrick Garcia. (Sinong nananiwala, bwa.)

•Mark Herras napaiyak sa mga balita. (Hindi pala.)

•Wow pambihira kalibasa si Jennylyn. (Marami na naman dito?)

•Mark happy as 'pagbalik-loan' role at Jen. (Inom alitan, period.)

BB talk

•DK ang kaibi belaneng-balser as if 'sol—Rabbit Padilla. (Gamol level.)

•Richard Gomez pony Jay BB Gumdaughael. (Mandi ngai si BB, type niya nagyng 'reading man.')

•Type nemaan dapa ni Gin-ma si BB? (Let's not go there.)

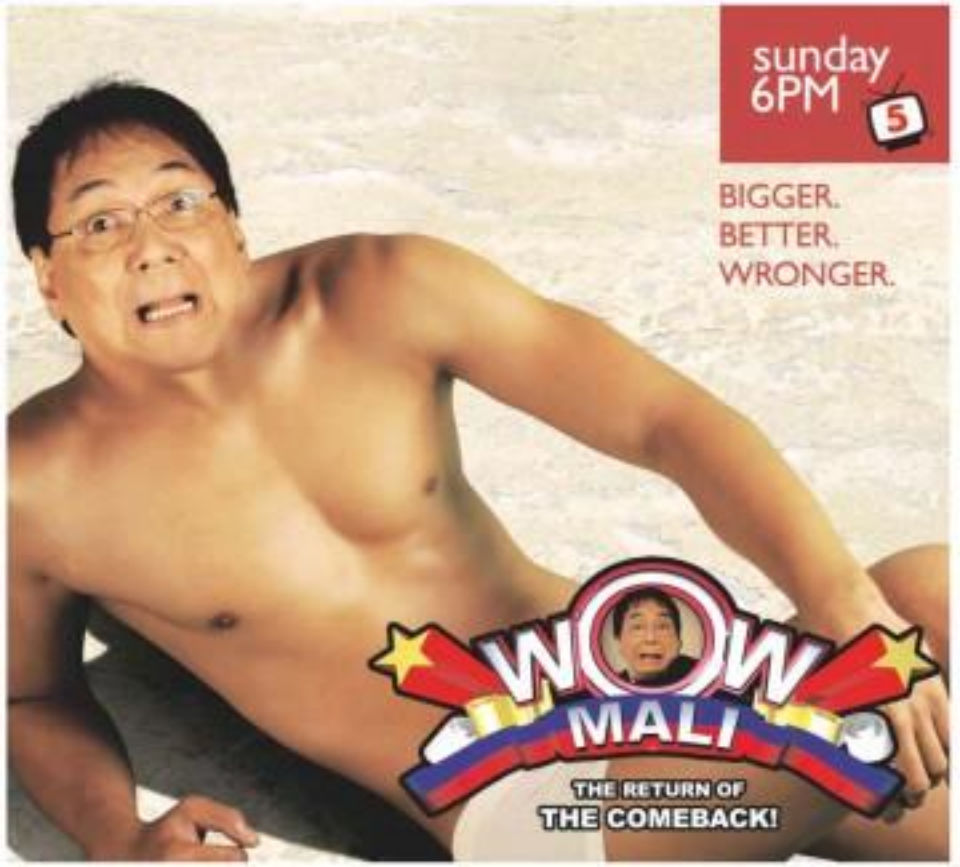
Post-V drama

•Biala Mae Quiwes nagsisi dahil kay Jon Avila. (Same plot, new characters.)

•Antonio Garcia, Mari Kamalaw may problema. (Sana sa kaindi na lang.)

•KC Concepcion ay

Inirulat: VI



ENTERTAINMENT

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'Mumbai Calling'

By Cora Lucas

"TERRORABLE COMMUNICATIONS", goes the voice on the other line. It's a help line for just about anything. How many calories are there in a chocolate bar? How can a baby can be delivered on the road?

It also offers traffic information and cell phone plans. It responds to home flood situations, gives instructions on computer repairs at home, and even counsels shareholders.

This is "Mumbai Calling", HSBC's new comedy series set in downtown Mumbai. Expectedly, the "Why Mumbai?" queries surfaced during a recent conference call for Asian entertainment writers. Lead actor and writer Sanjeev Bhaskar replied straightforwardly that "as much the world is not the 'real' India.

Bhaskar described the series as "comically accurate", with the touch "been a little" to fit the scenarios. "Any kind of dramatic power, whether comedy or drama, is not completely realistic," Bhaskar said during the conference call arranged by HSG Asia. "If you were realism, make a documentary. But there's enough in the series that people who work in call centers would recognize."

The idea for the sitcom series came about after Bhaskar, working as the time on a documentary series in India, encountered

SANJEEV BHASKAR

MUMBAI CALLING

Fil-Am's docu vies for Oscar

LOS ANGELES—RY BISSELL, A FILIPINO-American filmmaker, shot the acclaimed "Trouble the Water," which is vying for the Best Documentary Feature in tomorrow's Academy Awards.

"Trouble the Water," a powerful firsthand account of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath as seen through the eyes of a couple, won the 2008 Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary and was ranked as one of the 10 best films of 2008 by such critics as the Chicago Sun Times' Roger Ebert, The New Yorker's David Denby and Entertainment Weekly's Gina Arbenbrenner.

Carl Deal and Tia Lessin directed the documentary that was co-produced by actor Danny Glover.

Together with Carl and Tia, Ry, an award-winning cinematographer who also directs films, followed their couple, Kimberly and Scott Roberts, for about a year and a half in the devastating aftermath of Katrina. Kimberly's footage of her family's harrowing experience, when the hurricane struck, which she recorded with her video camera, is included in "Trouble the Water." Ry is listed as a co-cinematographer.

As a cinematographer, Ry, who was born in New Jersey, raised in California and is now based in Austin, Texas, earned the American Society of Cinematographers' Charles B. Lang Jr. Heritage Award and the Haskell Wexler Award for Best Cinematography. He shot director Kyle Henry's "Storm," which premiered in the Directors' Fortnight of the 2005 Cannes Film Festival.

Ry's directing credits include "Untitled," a feature documentary for which he also served as the cinematographer) on a group of transgender women in a small Colorado town that "will forever change" the sex change capital of the world. Dubbed as a "cinematic superhero," Ry is extensively lecturer at the University of Texas. He recently shot a punk rock show for a video art installation.

Below are excerpts from our interview via e-mail:

When you were shooting "Trouble the Water," did you get a sense that maybe you were on to something extraordinary?

I knew Kim and Scott had an incredible story to tell. Most katrina stories had been told from the media perspective, from outsiders looking in. Kim and Scott's story was from the family's perspective—a personal firsthand account of their experience during Hurricane Katrina and their ongoing struggle to recover. But as we continued filming, I think we all realized it wasn't just about their experience during the hurricane, but their struggles during their entire lives.

At that moment, I knew we were filming something the world needed to experience and learn from. And here we are nominated for an Academy Award! I honored and thankful as I am for all the recognition, I also hope this recognition urges more people to see the film and also inspires filmmakers to continue telling stories that need to be told.

What elements dominate your?

I think film is one of the most powerful story tellers...it has the ability to place a viewer in another person's experience. It can make one feel another's struggle or allow one to witness a life very different from his own. It has the ability to bring us together in a common experience, educate, empathize and empathize. There are so many stories that have not been told and so many people who could learn from other people's life experiences. These are the

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The Reader

How far would you go to protect a secret?

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NOKIA

'Mumbai Calling'

From page R1

call concern. He felt that the rumors' fanciful to Western audiences was worth exploring.

"Any film [set] TV program that opens an area of curiosity for the West is a good thing," he said. "Whether people agree or disagree with the piece of work, it generates interest. In fact, with any [form] of art, if everybody agrees with you, you're in trouble. It's important to annoy somebody, somewhere. That... creates debate, which is very healthy."

Bhaskar's curiosity about call centers gave birth to his character, Ramen Gupta, a London-bred accountant sent to ruin Tekkie-Ville. The story takes off with Gupta going AWOL after being dumped by his girlfriend, and with his assistant Dev Bajaj (Hrishi Gandotra) trying to get him back in work.

An emergency executive assessment ordered by the head office introduces him to the pretty audit officer, Tony Johnson (Daisy Beaumont).

Less worried

Most of the laughs revolve around these three characters and the encounter scenes against who listen sincerely but then send while listening to callers' offbeat ranting.

"As I grew older, I feel less and less worried about being like an idiot," Bhaskar said, referring to Ramen Gupta. "The best actors are those who reveal something about themselves in order to play the part."

Why does "Mumbai Calling" end with the seventh episode? Bhaskar blames it on the British filmmakers' penchant for mini series. "They have to have a cut-off."

(The series premieres Feb. 25, 10:30 p.m., on HBO.)

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Fil-Am's docu vies for Oscar

From page 96

filme I'm interested in working on and making whether they're documentary or non-fiction, dramatic or comedic. Film can make us cry together, laugh together, grow together. It's incredible.

How Filipino was your upbringing? And what elements of your Filipino heritage helped shape what you are today?

Though I consider myself a Californian, I was actually born in New Jersey. Both my parents were raised from the Philippines as different times and first met in New York. Soon after my sister and I were born, we moved to a small town in California called Clovis. Unlike some towns in California during the '80s, Clovis did not have a large Filipino population. I grew up very much being mistaken for Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, Indian or a combination of any of them! My friends were always fascinated by my parents' accents or enjoyed seeing my mother's color on spaghetti.

But even though I was different from most kids I knew, I was thankful for that experience. It made me comfortable being an individual and understanding the importance of honoring your cultural background in a larger society. My parents are proud of their culture and so am I. And thank God my parents cooked Filipino food for us every day or I would have eaten it! Eventually, I moved to San Diego and lived there for a number of years and studied both art and biology and eventually discovered film.

Are you familiar with Filipino cinema?

I'm actually quite terrible when it comes to watching films in the theater. My friends always joke and say that for a filmmaker, I rarely watch anything! But I'm trying to be better about this...though I'd like to think I have a little bit of an excuse since I've been so busy making films!

If you had to choose between being a cinematographer and a director, which one would you pick?

Ideally, I'd always be both a director and cinematographer. I love that my job offers way it to be creative. As a cinematographer, I get to be part of the creative process but ultimately someone else has to answer for all the decisions at the end of the day. I love being behind the camera, knowing I'm capturing an amazing performance or an unreproducible moment in time and that someone else will take the footage and take it to another level.

But films are also projects where I want to be the main creative driving force—the vision behind the whole film, and that is why I love directing as well. I also appreciate how film can be a collaborative medium.

Looking back at your Cannes 2005 experience, what were the highlights that stand out in your memory in this day?

My trip to the Cannes Film Festival back in May 2005 was an eye-opening experience. It was my first time attending a festival and that and experience surrounding the film industry at an international level. There were filmmakers from almost every country walking the streets and enjoying the festival and sunshine. It was also great to be in a place where audiences assisted to truly celebrate the filmmakers and the films, not just the celebrities in them.

I remember walking the red carpet and being stunned at all the photo flashes blazing and equally amazed when audiences stood up and applauded the directors of each film. The trip was a festival highlight of my career thus far for sure. Plus, you can't beat the French Riviera in May! Beautiful.

How much of your filmmaking sensibility and aesthetics were formed in Austin?

FILIPINO: Aeveil on Fil Rural (front, with camera) and the crew and subjects of "Trouble the Water." Fil is the cinematographer of the documentary, considered by some critics as one of the best. Fil films of 2008.

Austin is a really great place for creativity. People are still genuinely excited about filmmaking and audiences appreciate, support and go see the films. It's a town filled with artists of all sorts and everyone is encouraged to be creative in their own ways. Since it's over Santa Monica or Los Angeles, there's a sense of the film industry but not an overwhelming presence that would stifle someone's creative process. You're allowed to create work on your own terms. Of course, there is not being one of the cons, it has its own set of challenges. But for me, Austin has allowed me to explore my creativity without the pressure of being in one of the film industry capitals. I've been able to play and explore creatively.

Can you tell us about your experience shooting punk shows for a video art installation by British artist and filmmaker Mark Neale?

Shooting bands using **Mark Neales'** punk rock art installation "These Are The Days" was quite an experience. Though familiar with the punk rock scene, I can't claim firsthand to have jumped into a mosh pit or have been in the front of a stage with close and quick rock-on pushed so tightly together that flow and sway like a sea of waves. Pure the experience of shooting the band recording an original song inspired by the crowd footage was a new experience.

Being covered is relentless filled with people who represent the true anti-establishment DIY (do it yourself) movement was incredibly inspiring. As one of the posters in Mark's show states, "You can keep your overpriced, cheese-plated, garbage can of a society life will not participate." I love that. I live by your own rules.

If money and resources were not a hindrance, is there one film project you would like to do?

A little known fact is that I actually love to make an animated film or claymation piece. It's not really a question of money but one more down-time and the fact that I have no real animation skills! But for now I'll stick to films with people in front of the camera. I'd love to make a film outside the U.S.—The Philippines perhaps!

What are your next projects?

Right now, I have a narrative script about a coming of age story between a young single mother and her teenaged teenage son that I'd love to make. I'm also developing a new documentary about LGBTQ (lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender and queer) activism that I want to spread out over time, similar to how I made "Trouble the Water." "Trouble."

In the meantime, I've been keeping busy making short films and music videos with friends for fun, for trying to take advantage of those small pieces and focus on being creative and taking risks—a chance to expand my artistic abilities.

Where do you visit and what do you do to relax?

I visit on the plane! No really I try to make an effort to take time for myself and relax, though lately it has become harder to set any "personal" time aside. I'm a fan of catching up with friends and loved ones over good food and drinks. To be honest, I really enjoy my work so I don't think I ever view it entirely as work. Even when I'm technically off the clock, I'm still working. I'm always thinking of something to make, see, read or listen to. Lately I've been really into public radio shows like "This American Life." I'm also rediscovering my love for photography and how I miss taking photos for fun.

What are your thoughts as Oscar day approaches?

I know it sounds cliché but a trip as an honor just to be nominated. To be recognized for doing something I love...for a project I am so proud of and really believe in is an achievement on its own. The experience has been completely amazing and unexpected. I think the only thing that could make it more surreal is if we win an Oscar! Fingers crossed...

E-mail the columnist at <mailto:JOHN@yahoo.com> and read his blog, "The Manila Report," on <http://blogs.inquirer.net/manilareport>

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2 new girls in Sam's life

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THERE ARE TWO HOT GIRLS in the life of Sam Milby, PA. (Pinoy Ameer Cruella).

He isn't referring to Any Abrazo or Mimi Rayson, who have recently been linked to him in the columns, but is talking about new screen partners Bea Alonzo and Angel Locsin.

He just started work on the movie, "And I Love You So" with Bea. "I'm growing my hair because I'm playing a guy who doesn't care about his looks," Sam told entertainment writers recently, adding that Bea is a lot like him on the set. "She's also a perfectionist."

New soap

He's looking forward to a new soap opera, "Only You," with Angel. "I was lucky to be her first partner when she moved to ABS-CBN," Sam said. "We first worked together on 'Hindakat Mi Ikaw.'"

What's the deal on Mimi, star of GMA-7's "La Lola"? His reply: "I've met her only twice. We have not started yet, so I thought it was kinda funny when it was reported that I was courting her."

He couldn't understand why a big fuss was made over his visit to the "La Lola" set. "It was just a friend visiting another friend. I was in the area and I wanted to see my fellow newsies in the rest of 'La Lola's' blazing realness."

The resulting controversy caught him a tad leeryin. Most chair of possible roommate. He said he has visited Batgirl out with Army. "We're not back together, but we're friends. It was awkward at first, but our relationship has improved."

He's focusing on work. Yesterday, he had a concert with Piolo Pascual, Mark Bautista, Christian Bautista and Erik Santos, "Pop Icons," at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We produced the show ourselves," Sam said. "I've always wanted to produce my own program, and working with friends is a good way to start and learn the business side of my job."

Sam Milby has homesick over chair of possible roomie.

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